WORLD CITIZEN

Norman Cousins

Interviewed by Andrew D. Basiago

VOLUME II

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Frontispiece (left to right): Norman Cousins at age twenty-seven; Amy Loveman, editor, Saturday Review of Literature; Harrison Smith, publisher; J.R. Cominsky, business manager. Photograph courtesy of Norman Cousins.

CONTENTS

VOLUME II

TAPE NUMBER: XI, Side One (February 3, 1988).....315

Evolution of the United World Federalists--Influence of Grenville Clark--Division of world government forces into maximalists, minimalists, and miximalists--Perception that Cousins was unduly anticommunist--Whether to give the Soviet Union the secret of the atomic bomb--John Foster Dulles's mistaken assumption of monolithic communism.

TAPE NUMBER: XI, Side Two (February 3, 1988).....334

Dulles's failure to distinguish communist theory from communist practice--Failure of Marxist theory--The USSR rewarded party loyalty above expertise--How anticommunism weakened the trend toward world government--Alan Cranston's activities with the United World Federalists.

TAPE NUMBER: XII, Side One (March 2, 1988).....353

Connections between the United World Federalists and scientists and universities--European world federalists--Cousins's opinion of J. Robert Oppenheimer--Considered for but declined a possible appointment to the United States Senate--Angry reaction to Cousins's 1949 Waldorf-Astoria speech--Necessity of labeling communist front organizations.

TAPE NUMBER: XII, Side Two (March 2, 1988).....372

Reflections on McCarthyism--Bifurcation of postwar American intellectual life--Campaigning for Adlai E. Stevenson--Writing controversial speeches that inadvertently hurt Stevenson--Intellectual honesty of Senator Robert A. Taft.

TAPE NUMBER: XIII, Side One (March 29, 1988).....387

Origin and evolution of SANE, the Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy--Using the 1952 Stevenson presidential campaign to warn of the dangers of thermonuclear war--Trying to keep politics out of the antinuclear movement--Analyzing arguments for

developing a thermonuclear bomb--Clashing with Edward Teller--Distinction between radical pacifism and nuclear disarmament--Evolution of the Dwight D. Eisenhower presidency.

TAPE NUMBER: XIV, Side One (May 9, 1988).....408

More on the goals of SANE--Lobbying for a ban on nuclear testing--Creating an antinuclear constituency--Attacks on SANE as communist-controlled--Compromises required to achieve the 1962 nuclear test ban--Cousins's contribution to President John F. Kennedy's American University speech urging rapprochement with the Soviet Union--Conflicts with Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller over fallout shelters.

TAPE NUMBER: XIV, Side Two (May 9, 1988).....427

Impact of the assassination of John F. Kennedy on Cousins and the country--Cousins's attitude toward the Vietnam War.

TAPE NUMBER: XV, Side One (June 7, 1988).....434

Founding the Citizens Committee for a Nuclear Test Ban--Creating the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency--Involvement of Hubert H. Humphrey in arms control--Assessing the significance of the nuclear test ban treaty--Cousins's decision to resign from SANE--Suspicions about the Kennedy assassination--Speculation on a psychological connection between the assassination and Cousins's contracting collagen disease--Lyndon B. Johnson's efforts to pursue Kennedy's objectives--Pressures on Johnson to escalate the Vietnam War.

TAPE NUMBER: XV, Side Two (June 7, 1988).....454

More on Cousins's illness.

TAPE NUMBER: XVI, Side One (June 28, 1988).....456

Origin and evolution of the Dartmouth Conference exchanges between the United States and the USSR--The conferences' independence from government interference--Making friends with Soviet delegates--Conflicts at Dartmouth conferences--

Cousins's relations with Russians--Reflections on the Russian people--The effects of glasnost and perestroika.

TAPE NUMBER: XVI, Side Two (June 28, 1988).....474

Difficulties Soviets faced in sifting through conflicting American expressions of opinion--Posturing at arms control conferences.

TAPE NUMBER: XVII, Side One (July 6, 1988).....480

Role of Dartmouth Conference conferees during the Cuban Missile Crisis--More on selection of conferees--Suspension of Dartmouth conferences during the Vietnam War.

TAPE NUMBER: XVIII, Side One (July 13, 1988).....495

Buckminster Fuller's Dartmouth Conference participation--Anecdotes about Fuller--Fuller's ideas--Discussion of environmental issues at the Dartmouth conferences--The Soviet Union's belated recognition of its environmental problems--The issue of Most-Favored-Nation status for the USSR and its linkage to emigration from the Soviet Union.

TAPE NUMBER: XVIII, Side Two (July 13, 1988).....514

Persuading the USSR to respect American copyright laws--Chill in U.S.-Soviet relations in the mid-1970s--Joint efforts to prevent nuclear proliferation--Cousins's concern over Soviet human rights violations--Reflections on U.S.-USSR negotiations.

TAPE NUMBER: XIX, Side One (August 1, 1988).....527

Reasons why Cousins left the Saturday Review of Literature--Cousins's shift to writing about health and healing--Hypothesis that how we think about an illness can affect its outcome--UCLA School of Medicine's overtures to Cousins--Response of physicians to Cousins's ideas--Breakthroughs in psychoneuroimmunology--Creating the UCLA Program in Psychoneuroimmunology--Psychological needs of cancer patients--Physiological impact of stress.

TAPE NUMBER: XIX, Side Two (August 1, 1988).....548

The significance of placebos--Case studies of the mind curing illness--Creating an environment in which medicine works best.

TAPE NUMBER: XX, Side One (August 8, 1988).....555

Cousins's relevant health history--The Hiroshima Maidens medical project--Overcoming State Department opposition--The Ravensbrück Lapins medical project--Biafran children medical project--Trip to wartime Biafra--Cousins's interest in reforming medical education.

TAPE NUMBER: XX, Side Two (August 8, 1988).....573

Serving on the medical advisory group for the Veterans Administration--The medical consequences of Agent Orange--Acting as an informal UCLA medical ombudsman.

TAPE NUMBER: XXI, Side One (August 15, 1988).....582

Review of the Saturday Review of Literature's editorial campaigns--Regrets about the low level and cynicism of modern journalistic criticism--Reflections on the state of the world--Finding hope in imponderables.

Index.....591

TAPE NUMBER: XI, SIDE ONE

FEBRUARY 3, 1988

BASIAGO: According to the **Annals of America**, which is published by the Encyclopaedia Britannica [Inc.], "[United] World Federalist groups were active in many countries for a few years after World War II, but by the 1950s the movement had largely petered out," this source contends, "mainly owing to the impossibility of doing anything about the profound opposition between the U.S. and the Soviet Union." I imagine you would believe that such an account leaves many details unsaid. To supplement the historical record, today I'd like to chart the breadth and scope of the United World Federalists [UWF] as a political organization, exploring its history throughout the forties, fifties, and sixties. I guess maybe the best way to start would be to touch upon the important meetings in the early phase of the United World Federalists. The first was at Dublin, New Hampshire, at Grenville Clark's family farmhouse. I guess in some ways Clark became sort of the Ben Franklin of that period of political development. What are your recollections of Clark? When did you first meet him, and how deep was the friendship?

COUSINS: Well, long before the meeting at Clark's place in Dublin, there was a great deal of activity, albeit under different names. The Clark meeting was almost a

consequence of, or a culmination of, many things that occurred during that period. Even before the war ended we had a group called Americans United for World Organization. I think we've spoken about that. And then, when the bomb was dropped, it seemed clear to many of us that the timetable that had been the chronological context in which we operated was no longer valid. I did a piece at the end of the war called "Modern Man is Obsolete" that appeared the week after the bomb was dropped. A lot of people got in touch with me about that, including [Albert] Einstein. I remember getting a telephone call from Edgar Ansel Mowrer, the correspondent for the Chicago Daily News, I guess, who said that a woman by the name of Mildred Blake and Mark Van Doren, the poet, thought we ought to get together. That was one such meeting at which we began to discuss world government. Then our own group of Americans United for World Organization recognized, at the very first meeting after Hiroshima, that the organization ought to be changed to Americans United for World Government, and that in itself became something of a rallying ground and a growth center. With all these groups springing up, and there's Stringfellow Barr, and--

BASIAGO: Was he a leader of a different organization before the meeting at Clark's farmhouse?

COUSINS: Oh, yes. Stringfellow Barr and all the members

of the Saint John's [University] group were active in this general direction. The Clark meeting didn't take place until fall of next year, I believe, in '46.

BASIAGO: Well, I believe it was October of 1945.

COUSINS: 'Forty-five. That's right, it didn't take place until the fall. But meanwhile, as I say, there had been a great many flurries. So that by the time we got to Dublin, you had at least three or four separate thrusts. Then you also had unorganized intellectual centers, one of them built around Emery Reves and his book, **The Anatomy of Peace**. Dublin, therefore, was something of a confluence of all these streams. A lot of people came to Dublin with different agendas. Grenville Clark put his emphasis in getting up the invitation list, which he did with Supreme Court Justice [Owen J.] Roberts, on youth. He said that he wanted to select the men who, twenty years from then, would be leading the country. Well, there were a lot of people who were not very young, but some of them were. Cord Meyer; Kingman Brewster, who became president of Yale [University], and also an American ambassador to Great Britain; [Herbert] Claiborne Pell--

BASIAGO: There's a name I hadn't found in the reading. Okay, I guess of course Alan Cranston.

COUSINS: Yes, Alan Cranston. I think that John [F.] Kennedy [JFK] came to one of the meetings.

BASIAGO: I found a source from Alan Cranston, who wrote that "Norman persists in the belief that a slim young man still in naval uniform dropped up from Boston for a few hours one afternoon."

COUSINS: That's right. He thinks that's not--

BASIAGO: I'm uncertain whether JFK was actually there.

COUSINS: That was my impression. Did you see Cranston?

BASIAGO: Personally?

COUSINS: Yes.

BASIAGO: No, no.

COUSINS: I think young Marshall Field [III] was there.

BASIAGO: You probably knew of the other forty-eight. I have some other names, of course, from the older generation, so to speak: Thomas K. Finletter--

COUSINS: Of course, yes.

BASIAGO: --and Manhattan Project scientist Robert [D.] Smith--

COUSINS: Yes.

BASIAGO: --Senator Styles Bridges, and, of course, Edgar Ansel Mowrer. Do you recall any of the other forty-eight that were on the original list?

COUSINS: Possibly Harry [B.] Hollins; Emery Reves; Louis Fischer, the correspondent, political writer. In any event, Grenny Clark began the meeting on behalf of himself and Justice Roberts, who was there. They had sent out the

invitations. He gave the background. I'll never forget his remarks or that manner of very calm but unmistakable authority; the way he spoke and used his hands; the reasonableness of the man; the historical background and depth; the personal experience he had had that he could draw upon; and the clear vision of what was necessary. Some of the Young Turks at that meeting thought that he didn't go far enough, because he spoke about limited world government. This was the first time those three words were used together, with capital letters almost. But his approach was designed to take this whole concept out of the orbit of radicalism. Then the way in which he connected it to the possibility of the United Nations's development into a limited world government. He put his emphasis on the term world law, and he did have a profound effect. Grenny was a man of infinite goodwill, without being a Pollyanna. He always-- I've written about him in this regard-- I've always thought of him as someone who would have been very much at home in the company of the American founding fathers. He had that broad liberalism in the very best sense. He was a born leader; he knew how to bring people along with him because he didn't give the impression of leading them. He gave the impression just of communicating with them in a way that gave you complete confidence that wherever he wanted to go was where you

wanted to be. In his opening talk, as I say, he tried to anticipate the problems that the country and the world would face as the knowledge of the bomb spread from place to place. He spoke about American-Russian relations in the long view and how these relations would become exacerbated when the arms race itself became a prime fact for the tension between the two countries.

BASIAGO: I was curious about something in that area. He spoke of limited but adequate powers in the world government. I was wondering, to the degree that he was envisioning nuclear proliferation, how would a government at once limit its intrusiveness in various nation-states and at the same time stem a nuclear arms race?

COUSINS: He was not talking in terms of voluntary limitations but of statutory limitations--limitations that would be placed upon governments. He was thinking in terms of a common authority or an external authority, which would do the limiting, which itself would have enough powers to do the job, but powers that would not be intrusive, and powers that would be confined to those matters concerned with common dangers and common needs. But he never assumed that governments by themselves would limit their activity or their interests. As a matter of fact, that was part of the problem as he saw it. That governments couldn't be trusted to define national limitations or their

interests.

BASIAGO: So he was envisioning, really, never trampling on sovereignty.

COUSINS: He had a rather different definition of sovereignty from most people. He would ask himself: What is workable and what are the legitimate concerns? What is the legitimate reach of national governments? [He] made a very clear distinction between the authority that a government would have within its own borders and what it did outside its own borders, by way of attending to what it conceived to be its sovereign concerns. When you asked for memories of Grenny Clark, one of my most vivid memories was at Dartmouth [College], for the first meeting of the Americans and Russians in the Dartmouth Conference series. How in a moment of tension between the two groups, when it seemed almost as though we were deadlocked philosophically, and not just politically, Grenny spoke, oh, maybe for twenty minutes or so, about the Soviet people and their ordeal during the war. How important it was for Americans to understand that the Russian reaction to the war was entirely different from our own. You could almost see the Russians melting as he spoke, because he would say far better than they did why it was that they felt as they did. That not only broke the deadlock but built a bridge, and sometimes I think the traffic is still passing over

that bridge that he built at Dartmouth.

BASIAGO: You mentioned some of the Young Turks at the first meeting at Dublin, New Hampshire, felt that he didn't go far enough when he spoke of limited world government. Was that the group that consisted of the younger representatives, such as Cord Meyer and Alan Cranston and yourself?

COUSINS: No, no.

BASIAGO: Who was disagreeing with Clark?

COUSINS: Emery Reves, who felt that we were temporizing, and maybe Louis Fischer. I have him in mind, for some reason. But most of the people there accepted Grenny Clark's analysis of the world situation and how best to go about meeting it.

BASIAGO: As the forties rolled into the fifties, did you remain in close contact with any of the representatives, any of these younger individuals, for instance?

COUSINS: Yes. Because in '47, we went to Asheville [North Carolina] to found the [United] World Federalists, and some of the people at Dublin were also at Asheville: Tom Finletter, Cord Meyer. I don't know whether Alan Cranston was there or not. I'm not sure, maybe he was. Asheville was a cohesive grouping, because you had people from different vantage points, maximalists, minimalists, miximalists. You had the young Chicago group--

BASIAGO: Consisting of who? [Robert Maynard] Hutchins and--

COUSINS: No, a young group, kids. I see their faces. One of them there was with the [Charles F.] Kettering Foundation, superintending such affairs as Dartmouth. One of them became the assistant head of the Peace Corps. All very bright, thinking people, but very impassioned. One of them became the president of [State University of New York] Stony Brook, I believe, and before that of a girls'-- Rollins College, maybe. Or Bryn Mawr, after serving as head of the Peace Corps in India. And Grenny Clark's anticipations were quite correct about these people, and the fact that they were doers. He predicted prominent futures for them. Now most of us are older than Grenny Clark was at the time he brought us to Dublin.

BASIAGO: Cranston wrote that soon after he was appointed chairman of the Dublin conference, it became clear that his principal responsibilities were to help execute Clark's strategies and to actually physically carry out his ideas and his probing questions to people in high and far places. He mentions visits to the UN [United Nations] assembly at Lake Success [New York], where he met with Carlos [P.] Romulo; visits to India to visit Nehru on Clark's behalf. He sort of admits to becoming somewhat of a junior partner in Clark's endeavors. What was your

specific role with Clark? Did you become sort of a protégé as well?

COUSINS: No, I was a follower, I was not a protégé. After Cord Meyer served as president, I became the second president of the United World Federalists, and stayed in close touch with Grenny Clark, who, when he came to New York, would have lunch with me, any number of times. I think Grenny probably felt that I was too conservative myself, because I was the leader of the miximalist faction. We didn't see any real hard lines between minimalists and maximalists. We felt that the goals certainly ought to be clearly defined, but at the same time you did have a tactical problem: how to bring people along. The maximalists wanted to talk about sidetracking in the United Nations, feeling it wouldn't get anywhere. We recognized, as they did, the weaknesses of the UN. But at the same time we also recognized that it had a basic usefulness that couldn't be disregarded or discounted, and that if you lost the UN you might lose a lot of the ground on which you had a stand for building something better. Einstein felt that I tended to be a little too conservative, too. Einstein tended to feel that we ought to declare for world government and not be too concerned about tactical problems.

BASIAGO: I found a letter from Einstein to yourself in which he seems somewhat angry that you were overestimating

the resistance of the Soviet Union to cooperating with various visions of world order. He sort of believed that you were helping whip up some of the hysteria about the Soviet Union. Did you ever work out that disagreement with Einstein?

COUSINS: We had some talks about it. I think it's quite possible that Einstein just saw the public or the surface story of my appearance at the Waldorf peace conference [Cultural and Scientific Conference for World Peace (1949)]. I don't know whether you know about that.

BASIAGO: Yeah, I'd hoped to ask you about that. You're speaking of the "Tell the Folks Back Home" speech?

COUSINS: Yes. It was front-page news, and it almost seemed as though I was just waving antired flags. That is something we ought to talk about, too. Lillian Hellman was very angry with me because of that.

BASIAGO: That seemed to be, I guess, what historians might call a defining moment in that period of history, at least in terms of the world federalists' attitudes toward communism.

COUSINS: You see, I believed that it was necessary to come to terms with the Soviet Union, and I was terrified by the way any attempts to reduce tensions between the two countries was being tagged as communist activity. My talk at the Waldorf-Astoria tried to define an independent

position--one that favored a peaceful settlement of issues with the Soviet Union without accepting communist leadership towards that end. Margaret Mead said that the text of my talk made it clear that I was not doing any red-baiting. But she said the effect of what I said aligned me with those who were.

But I've no apologies to make for the Waldorf speech. We're now talking about the later forties. I'd always felt that while we had to be very careful about issues involving suppression of political views, there was the need for honest labeling. I thought it was possible to call for peace with the Soviet Union, a structured peace, which was what I was always interested in, without allowing the communists to exploit that issue. Certainly I didn't think it was necessary to have them lead the peace parade in the United States, and they were trying to exploit it. That's a position I took then and I've never deviated from it. And I've been active with the Dartmouth Conference series, been very eager to improve relations with the Soviet [Union], trying to take advantage of any legitimate opening or improve understanding. But I didn't think it was necessary to become a member of the Communist Party in order to do it or to allow the communists to lead that particular issue. Because I didn't think they were really interested in anything except the cause of the Soviet

Union, and I didn't think they were an independent political group to begin with. And the flip-flops that they had taken, following the Soviet Union blindly through the [Nazi-Soviet] Non-Aggression Pact [1939], for example, proved that it was not really an independent political movement. Therefore, it was a matter of honest labeling. It was that point of view that I tried to reflect at the Waldorf meeting. Which is to say, serious negotiations with the Soviet Union, yes. Communist Party leadership inside the United States under disguised banners, no.

BASIAGO: You mentioned the structured peace that you endorsed as an alternative to that. I found one source that claimed that Clark had advised President [Harry S] Truman to share the atomic secret with Russia after the war. How far would this structured peace go? Was that a position that Clark or yourself or the world federalists were endorsing, prior to the Soviet--?

COUSINS: Well, that was a separate issue, really. Clark knew that the Soviet Union was going to get the bomb and that the notion of some American scientists and military leaders that we had a twenty-year lead was absurd and was being refuted by everything that was known about science. Since they were going to get the bomb, he thought that it might be useful for us to use that as a way of heading off an atomic armaments race. So giving the Russians the so-

called secret fit into a much larger context, where he wanted to use our knowledge with respect to the bomb actually to head off atomic development inside the Soviet Union. He would not give our secrets for the purpose of getting the Soviet Union into the arms race, quite the contrary. He wanted to use that particular power in a way that could head it off. We would start cutting back immediately, in return for the fact that the Soviet Union would not proceed with its development. For us to think that we had any security with the bomb at that time was illusory. The only real security would be if the Soviet Union could be headed off from the atomic armaments race. He was right in this respect, as history has showed.

BASIAGO: Clark had unveiled his basic proposal in 1944, in the **Indiana Law Journal**. He had a five-point program for his limited but adequate world government: a legislature which would have a carefully worked-out system of proportional representation; an executive council chosen by the legislature; a world police force; international courts; and a world revenue system. Were these maintained throughout as planks in the world federalist platform?

COUSINS: The world federalists were not being doctrinaire. We weren't so much tied to a specific plan as we were to a general direction. The general direction had to do with governance. We felt there were a number of

different approaches to it. There were federalists who, as I said, were maximalists, who believed that nothing less than a fully-structured government of the nations of the world would be adequate. And then many federalists who felt that such a government could not be achieved, and in any case would be undesirable, because of the kind of powers that it had. There were those who felt that what we ought to do is to start with clearly recognized common dangers--world environmental contamination; the arms race; border warfare; national disputes--and develop a specific machinery to deal with these, and that as this machinery came into being and evolved, it would lead to the kind of governance that Grenny Clark had in mind. That's what I mean when I say that was the general direction rather than the specific plan that concerned us.

BASIAGO: Was he, or others, operating under the assumption that the lack of these things were actually fuse points for war? For instance, were they operating from a theory of warfare?

COUSINS: Precisely.

BASIAGO: So that things like currency fluctuations and the lack of an adequate world revenue system had actually led to war in the past?

COUSINS: In certain areas, in certain regions it did. But the lack of security in terms of definition of borders and

maintenance of the integrity of borders, which is to say, territorial disputes as we see between China and the Soviet Union today, was certainly a cause of war. The recourse to history showed many reasons for war, going far beyond territorial disputes, of course. Sometimes naked ambition and aggression led to war. But the federalists were literally federalists, which is to say, they stayed very close to historical concepts developed at the American Constitutional Convention, in terms of breakdown among nations, and addressed themselves not only to known causes, but to the possibility of causes that have yet to make their appearance. Which is to say, do you have the machinery to deal with problems when those problems arise?

BASIAGO: Clark, of course, had been one of the architects of FDR [Franklin D. Roosevelt]'s Hundred Days and was the prime mover toward the Selective Service Act of 1940. As an aid to Secretary of War [Henry L.] Stimson, he had gotten the famous instructions from Stimson to "go home and try to figure out a way to stop the next war and all future wars." What was Clark's degree of autonomy from the official policy of the U.S. government and its foreign policy? How did the subsequent administrations view Clark and the world federalist movement, for instance? And how independent from the government was Clark during the growth of the United World Federalists?

COUSINS: Clark was the patron saint of the movement. He held no position in it, yet he was a dominant figure in it. He also provided connective tissue to people we couldn't reach otherwise and also to government. [He] was widely respected, but it was clear that he was far ahead of officialdom. And the process of change is not just a matter of having people in government, say, the White House, call up Clark and say, "Grenny, you're absolutely right." In government, especially this government, you always deal with the fact of consensus and the need to develop techniques having to do with the engineering of policy and change, which Clark understood very clearly. We met with Truman once, and Truman took out from his wallet a tattered old copy of Tennyson's "Locksley Hall," one of the culminating lines of which is we look forward to "a federation of the world." I remember Truman proudly taking that out of his wallet, saying it was his favorite piece of poetry and philosophy, and reading the last few lines. "Let the flags be unfurled in the parliament of man, federation of the world." But Truman's philosophical commitment to that idea obviously wasn't enough, because he was dealing with forces of motion not just outside the United States but within the government. Well, I've written many times about the limitations in the power of the presidency and how it takes a very extraordinary man to

be able to surmount all these competing pressures and bring people along.

BASIAGO: What about John Foster Dulles? I found a few references that seem to suggest that he privately supported the world federalist cause but publicly never made that widely known. Did you have any dealings with Dulles?

COUSINS: With his brother, Allen [W. Dulles]. But John Foster Dulles was an interesting example of someone whose private philosophy is completely overtaken by the world of plot-and-counterplot once you get into government. It is true that the moment you become an official representative of the government, especially if you've got to deal with the Soviet Union, you get involved in a point-scoring system. It's a contest of wills, a realization that the weight of the United States is on your back. You're not going to be bested, and your antennae are up for anything that might take advantage of us. He was a supreme reflection of that plot-and-counterplot psychology that overtakes people.

This is not to say that he was going totally against his philosophy, because his ideas about communism were badly dated. He regarded this as a monolithic world movement. He didn't allow sufficiently for the impress of nationalism on ideology or the fact that ideology would be subordinate to national interests. When he would speak

about world communism, he lost sight of the fact that you could have communist powers embroiled in controversy and possible war among themselves. This was a very serious failure, because it didn't take into account the severe differences of opinion or the tensions between the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China. Dulles, in regarding communism as a world monolith, disadvantaged the United States, because we were not dealing with real things.

The same thing was true in Vietnam, where we just assumed that we were dealing with a domino game, and that the basic force in that movement to cause these dominoes to topple was communism. We weren't prepared for the fact that North Vietnam and China had historical differences which transcended ideological affinities. We weren't prepared for the independence, or the desire of Ho Chi Minh to be independent of China as well as other countries. We were totally surprised by the fact that communist North Vietnam and Cambodia could be at loggerheads and even at war. So this very simplistic interpretation we made about communism as a world monolith, overlooking the national histories as the basic conditioner, has been very costly. Foster Dulles was one of the primary figures responsible for this notion that we were dealing with a single communist force. But even there, he tended to deal with a stereotype when he spoke about communism.

COUSINS: He never recognized, or even if he had recognized, did he talk about the difference between theoretical communism and functioning communism. Communism was really a theory. In practice it was something else. He mistook the practice for the theory and the theory for the practice. As a churchman, he was appalled by what he believed to be the godlessness of the USSR. I don't think he ever recognized that more babies were baptized in the Soviet Union than in the United States and that shutting down the churches didn't mean that you could shut down on religion. Nor did he attempt to factor in the experience of the Russians under the czars, when religion was exploited as an arm of the totalitarianism of the czars and the tyranny. It became an instrument of government, an instrument of repression. Well, that whole historical aspect was missing from his view. So that the U.S. was not dealing with real things. Our policy was based on inadequate analysis and certainly didn't take into account the fact that Marxism still was theoretical. Marxism never really worked in the Soviet Union, any more than it has worked anywhere else. Marx didn't understand production. The Russian leaders realized that no country could be strong or great unless it could produce. Meanwhile, they

had five-year plans in industry and agriculture and never really made their goals. They weren't producing under Marx; Marx was a social philosopher. Marx took production for granted, something that would happen by itself. And he saw great evils in overproduction, certainly in the capitalist countries, where he felt that this would lead to a race for overseas markets, and that this would lead to war. So he saw war as inherent in the nature of capitalism because of that.

Well, the communist leaders eventually realized that the country could not exist unless the country could produce, not just in terms of trade with the rest of the world, but in terms of trying to meet the needs of its people--grow enough food, produce enough clothes, build roads, vehicles. They also discovered, too, that the attempt to leave production to the party was a serious error, because what the party did was to reward party members with the jobs in industry and agriculture. So party acceptability, rather than specific knowledge and training, became the criterion. You had people in charge of shoelace factories who didn't know anything about making shoelaces, and people walked around with broken shoelaces. The party would protect its own. And mixing cement for the new buildings was-- [laughter] Party loyalty didn't necessarily produce cement that wouldn't crack. So the

basis for running a society became not expertise but party loyalty.

Well, gradually, the communist leaders, some of them, began to understand that the Communist Party system of running a society wouldn't work. [Nikita S.] Khrushchev realized it, but couldn't get his ideas across; at least his manner of trying to get them across was unacceptable to the central committee. [Mikhail S.] Gorbachev--I'm skipping around here--is not very much different from Khrushchev. But he has finesse and recognizes that he's a Russian before he's a communist and that unless the Soviet Union can meet the needs of its people, it's not going to be able to hold its own in the world. And you can't really produce in a closed society, because the party will run everything. Error will not only be perpetuated, but concealed. And this is part of the total problem.

Well, Dulles never really understood what the real flaws and limitations of communism were. He thought he was dealing with classical Marxism. By not addressing himself to real issues, he was disadvantaging the United States. There were many people in the movement who might agree on the objectives, but whose view of the world tended to differ sharply from those of others in the same organization.

BASIAGO: Foster Dulles, of course, wasn't the only voice

to influence foreign policy during this era. In a recent book entitled **The Wise Men: Six Friends and the World they Made**, Walter Issacson and Evan Thomas develop the theory that the following six individuals had the greatest influence: [W.] Averell Harriman, Dean [G.] Acheson, Charles [E.] Bohlen, Robert [M.] Lovett, John [J.] McCloy, and George F. Kennan. I'd like to gauge the degree to which these six individuals had any dialogue with yourself or Grenville Clark or other prominent world federalists during the heyday of world federalist activity.

COUSINS: These men were highly respected and were called upon by governments, frequently by both parties, as in the case with John McCloy and George Kennan. But they were not deeply involved, or involved at all, in the world federalist movement. Some of them were very encouraging, however. I knew John McCloy, and he was very supportive. But this was his style in almost everything, anyway: very genial, very intelligent, a good listener, and very constructive. He would always attempt to see what the best was in any situation and how it could be applied. He served the world federalist movement, however, or at least served the basic thrust of the world federalists, in his discussions with [Valerian A.] Zorin. Those agreements were certainly in line with the thinking of world federalists on what our approach ought to be to the Soviet

Union.

BASIAGO: You're speaking of the McCloy-Zorin Agreement in 1961?

COUSINS: Yes.

BASIAGO: So that was really the only time when the careers of these six individuals intersected with the world federalist party?

COUSINS: Robert Morris Lovett was very progressive in his thinking about foreign policy, and in that sense was certainly congenial--had congenial ideas--so far as the federalists were concerned, because they were moving in the same general direction. Harriman was not a theoretician or an original thinker. Harriman was a superb negotiator and a congenial person to have around the table. Kennan was the most philosophical of the group. Kennan was regarded by federalists in those days as a gradualist. He had been involved directly in the government, and he knew exactly how far you could go. His feeling was that in pressing for everything you might lose everything, and that sequences were important too. But he wouldn't argue against the goal. I think that in his introduction to my book, his philosophy in that respect is rather explicitly stated.

BASIAGO: I find it fascinating that each of these individuals was a member of the New York Council on Foreign Relations. You mentioned earlier in an interview that you

were for a time.

COUSINS: I still am.

BASIAGO: Did you know any of them through that affiliation?

COUSINS: I was brought into the Council on Foreign Relations through Finletter and Frank Altschul, who were very prominent in the affairs of the council, especially Altschul. I went to their meetings, where they would bring in heads of state or other dignitaries coming to this country, or people in government who thought it a privilege to be able to speak to the council. Frank Altschul and Tom Finletter were early federalists. They were active participants at Grenny Clark's Dublin Conference. Then Frank Altschul came back from Dublin and wrote a series of pieces for the Stamford, Connecticut, **Advocate**, on world federalism. Finletter was one of the most supportive members of the movement and one of the officers of it for a long time. They brought me into the Council on Foreign Relations. I have no doubt that there were other people like Altschul and Finletter who were part of the establishment but who did have a larger vision than most of the members of the establishment professed.

BASIAGO: I found it interesting that Lovett and McCloy were spoken of as the "heavenly twins" who had aided Stimson during the war. Of course, Clark had also worked

for Stimson. Was Clark also closer to Lovett and McCloy than perhaps you were?

COUSINS: Yes, yes.

BASIAGO: Do you know anything about that relationship?

COUSINS: Well, Clark was respected by all of them.

BASIAGO: A few other names I find interesting. You mentioned of course Allen Dulles, the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] chief. One of the young representatives at the world federalist conference there at Dublin, of course, Cord Meyer, later became associated with the CIA. How well did you know these individuals?

COUSINS: Cord was a very good friend.

BASIAGO: How did you respond to his ultimate break with the world federalists during the [Joseph R.] McCarthy era?

COUSINS: He never really broke with them. But after he became head of the CIA, when I would talk to him, he would inevitably and invariably talk about the we-or-they aspect of the world struggle and the need to cope with the Soviet Union. That dominated his intellectual horizon, I think, as it would for anyone who had that particular job.

BASIAGO: So he sort of fell under the spell of Foster Dulles?

COUSINS: Allen Dulles, you mean?

BASIAGO: Yeah, I'm wondering if-- You'd mentioned that you had known Allen Dulles. How well did you know Allen

Dulles?

COUSINS: Not very well.

BASIAGO: Stringfellow Barr, of course, who you've identified as the leader of a different--

COUSINS: Maximalist group.

BASIAGO: Yeah, different strain, mentioned that Clark sort of forced the issue there at Dublin, between the United World Federalists and Federal Union, Inc., which of course was [Clarence K.] Streit's old group. He mentioned how as time passed, more and more members of Federal Union, Inc., felt that Streit was too doctrinaire and too fond of free enterprise, thus making it impossible for socialist countries to join. Louis B. Sohn, Clark's coauthor, put it even more bluntly. He mentioned that Clark's support for a universal world body forced a rupture with the supporters of Streit's Union Now movement. How do you recall it at Dublin? Was there a sort of a parting of the ways there between the Streit followers and Clark's group?

COUSINS: Americans United for World Organization, which in the early months after the war became Americans United for World Government, was a sort of a meeting ground for federalists and for Federal Union people. And we had friendly differences of opinion, none of the bitterness that you implied. It didn't seem to us at that time that we were in totally different arenas, or that we were in

competition. But as time passed, the real question was, how do you fit the Soviet Union into a larger organization?

Streit's emphasis on uniting the democracies, which originally had, or professed to have, the logic of history behind it--namely that you've got to try to combine with people who belong to the same tradition--gradually seemed to many of us in the literal federalist movement to have the effect of being a legalizing procedure for a coalition against the Soviet Union. We thought that if the basic purpose was to create world peace, that this was a strange way of doing it. In short, we wanted to hold our hand out to the Soviet Union and give them a chance to come in. We didn't feel that tradition should be part of the eligibility requirements; quite the contrary, the need was to keep the differences between the communist bloc and the Western bloc from becoming the fuse to war or conflagration. In limited government, we didn't feel that you had to have a single ideology. Because we, as you recall, were concerned with common dangers and common needs and the limited aspect of it, applied particularly to the desirability of maintaining sovereignty in domestic matters, but being part of a world authority in world matters. Streit accepted, as we did, the logic of larger connections and larger authority, but he felt that you do

this with the democracies of the West.

We recognized that it would be easy to do it with the democracies of the West, for the reason that he gave, but that the effect of this, as I say, would be to polarize the world. We recognized that it was possible the world might be polarized anyway, but we didn't want to speed up that process. Quite the contrary, what we wanted to do was to create a form into which the Soviet Union could fit. The Soviet Union was already in the United Nations. Therefore, by working within the United Nations, we hoped that we might be able to come out with a stronger UN--one that would have greater authority in matters concerned with world dangers--and that this would serve as an ameliorating and democratic force or tendency inside the Soviet Union. Such, at least, were the basic differences that we had with the Federal Union movement.

BASIAGO: To avoid polarization, you mentioned that at first certain common needs and problems would be addressed, such as the environmental crisis and the arms race, of course. Were there proactive things that were suggested in that area? For instance, I found that Clark was an advocate of national military service in the U.S., and later Cranston endorsed things like a national youth service corps. Was there any talk of an international youth service corps, an international Peace Corps, if you

will?

COUSINS: Yes, these were possibilities, or even necessities, that were frequently discussed. We saw the Peace Corps as a way of getting into a world recruitment to upgrade the conditions of people on the planet. The Peace Corps suggested it. A lot of us believed in the Peace Corps, advocated some such approach; I had written to Kennedy about it, as a matter of fact, and had written about it in the **Saturday Review** [of Literature]. I don't remember whether we called it the Peace Corps or not, but in some of my editorials before Kennedy you'll find that there was that proposal.

BASIAGO: So the original proposal was for an international--

COUSINS: What we wanted to do, once the Peace Corps was established, was to see if we couldn't get other countries to cooperate in making this a truly international body.

BASIAGO: A close friend and admirer of Grenville Clark was Edgar [P.] Snow, author of **Red Star Over China**, who dedicated the story of the Chinese communists "to Grenville Clark, who stood taller than his time." Do you recall their friendship, and do you have any awareness of what Snow's level of involvement with the world federalists was? Or how he was received by the world federalists?

COUSINS: Grenny made very strong personal friendships, and

Snow was a strong family friend. Snow was very close to Grenny's daughter, and therefore his son-in-law, [E.] Grey Diamond, who is the head of the medical school at the University of Missouri at Kansas City. Snow's influence led Diamond to open up contacts--he was one of the first to do this, long before Nixon went to China--between American and Chinese doctors. Diamond also headed many activities, memorial activities, connected with Edgar Snow. Clark had a great admiration for Edgar Snow and knew that the charges that Snow was a communist himself were absolute nonsense. He felt that Snow was performing a very valuable service in his books. Snow was much maligned in his time--this is the early fifties, of course--as we all were maligned at that time. It was the fifties that throttled the world federalist movement.

BASIAGO: As in McCarthyism, how was the movement treated by the national political climate?

COUSINS: Well, the fact that we spoke about sovereignty was anathema to that whole group. They said we were trying to destroy the United States, and that world federalism was a communist plot to undo the democracy or at least the Constitution. We saw it as an extension--as a fulfillment of it. But the fifties, the early fifties, were a bad time, and I don't think that the world federalists have ever really recovered from it. Because until that time,

the movement was going forward at a very fast pace, very fast, and suddenly people got scared. The very fact that federalism was equated with communism served, I think, to slow down the growth of the movement.

BASIAGO: That's always seemed to be one of the major themes of the John Birch Society--that world federalism has been a communist plot. Were there any national leaders, or any widely respected Americans, who attacked the world federalists from that viewpoint?

COUSINS: Outside the Birch Society?

BASIAGO: Yeah, outside of the Birch Society.

COUSINS: And outside George E. Sokolsky and Victor Lasky? No. As a matter of fact, some came to our defense. James Kilpatrick, for example, who is a right-wing or at least a conservative writer, would defend me personally and the federalists against those charges.

BASIAGO: Between 1946 and 1958, Clark and Sohn worked out the study and revision of the United Nations charter and published their famous book, **World Peace through World Law.** During this time, Clark was having Sohn up to his home in Dublin, as they grappled with issues related to world governance. As that book was authored, were you supplying insights or material that eventually got incorporated in Clark and Sohn's work?

COUSINS: No.

BASIAGO: Have you throughout the years ever encountered any world leaders who had read the Clark and Sohn book and been profoundly inspired by it?

COUSINS: No, but I brought it to their attention.

BASIAGO: It's often been said that the difference between Jefferson and Washington was that Jefferson hadn't seen as much bloodshed in battle as Washington and therefore had a more idealistic view of the world and of mankind. I was curious, which of the world federalists had seen combat in World War II or World War I and been shaped by that?

COUSINS: You mentioned one of them at the very start, the first president of the world federalists--Cord Meyer was wounded in the war.

BASIAGO: Were others besides Meyer?

COUSINS: A lot of the young people who were in World Republic in Chicago, who came into the federalist movement, were-- I don't suppose that the average was much different from what you would find in any group of people of that age.

BASIAGO: You haven't really spoken at any length regarding your relationship with Alan Cranston. Of course, he was the chairman there at the-- Was it the first meeting?

COUSINS: I'm not sure, he may have been the rapporteur.

BASIAGO: The rapporteur in Dublin?

COUSINS: Yes. Clark was the chairman.

BASIAGO: How far back do you go with Alan Cranston? Back to the days when he was with UPI [United Press International] and translating **Mein Kampf** into English?

COUSINS: He wrote a book about the UN, I believe. I ran into a number of connections, and we became friends. There was one period, as a matter of fact, where, when they were between homes, the entire family moved in with us in Connecticut. For a period of some weeks, as a matter of fact. He became, I think, my successor as president of the federalists. So we've known each other very well in a number of capacities.

BASIAGO: Has he been forced to abandon some of his--? Not abandon his belief in it, but sort of downplayed his world federalist sympathies or beliefs as a United States senator?

COUSINS: He hasn't used the Senate as a platform for advancing explicit world federalist ideas, but his position on issues very consistently has moved him in this direction. And we understand this. I think that Ronald [W.] Reagan had played down his world federalist background, too.

BASIAGO: Which consisted of what?

COUSINS: Well, he was very active at one time in Southern California in UWF.

BASIAGO: Did the world federalists have a certain plan of

action regarding influencing United Nations members?

COUSINS: Oh yes, oh yes.

BASIAGO: I find a connection between many of the members and Carlos [P.] Romulo.

COUSINS: Romulo had arranged for me to meet regularly with United Nations ambassadors. And we would have dinners at least once a month. That persisted even after he left the UN to become the foreign minister of the Philippines. We were very close at that time in the attempt to develop a cadre inside the UN.

BASIAGO: You mentioned the impact of McCarthyism upon the world federalists. I found a particular source that conjectured that it might have been Clark who was the discreet agent who, with John Foster Dulles, removed Alger Hiss from the State Department and installed him as a successor to [Nicholas] Murray Butler as president of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Do you recall that at all?

COUSINS: No.

BASIAGO: I guess we might end by getting back to the reality that had first inspired Clark and others to forge a vision of world federalism, which was the development of atomic weapons themselves. Did your attendance at the atomic bomb test at Bikini in June 1946 connect directly to your involvement with the world federalists?

COUSINS: Yes, I think so. Not that I needed additional evidence. Hiroshima provided as much as I needed in that particular direction. But this kept the public concern alive, and to that extent I thought was useful in getting acceptance for the case of world federalists. Namely, that the weapons of warfare had reached the point where warfare no longer became an instrument that was acceptable. We had to find ways other than war to defend ourselves. That it was the control of force, rather than the pursuit of force, that represented the source of our security. The Bikini tests were useful in that sense, although in many ways the tests were a fizzle. Everyone wanted to get into the act. The navy wanted to have an airdrop rather than the stationary scientific explosion. And the ships were deployed in such a way that when the bomb was dropped it was an inaccurate drop, and the bomb exploded over open sea almost a half mile from the nearest battleship, which may have been the Utah or the New Jersey. And it was not really a fair test. But the lack of depth perception of what this weapon was was symbolized when Secretary of the Navy [James V.] Forrestal came on board the Appalachian and said, "Fellas, let's go swimming." And they did, in the lagoon. We read that many of the people on the Appalachian are suing the government or have had a problem with malignancies. Such an air of unreality about the whole

thing--part carnival atmosphere, part (much smaller part) science, part politics, part reportage of the events, never really sorted out.

BASIAGO: Do you think there have been instances in which that air of unreality has reached even the highest levels of national governance, regarding atomic weapons?

COUSINS: I think that's true in Truman's case, certainly. It's certainly true in the decision to drop the bomb. I think, ultimately, history will report that Truman never really understood this force. That [James F.] Byrnes had persuaded him that the real value of the bomb was as a way of making the Soviet Union manageable in the postwar world.

BASIAGO: You've been very critical of Truman in the past, in that regard. How about subsequent United States presidents? Of course, similar charges were made regarding Ronald Reagan at the beginning of his first term, that he didn't really appreciate the advent of nuclear weapons, what that meant.

COUSINS: I don't know whether that particular charge can be sustained, because even before he became president, he had said--and I don't think he did this because he was prompted--that the trouble with most of the negotiations between the two countries was that they were directed to try and hold the line. Whereas the big problem was cutting

back, since holding the line didn't reduce the danger of nuclear warfare, considering what these nuclear weapons could do. So at the very start, he spoke about the need to cut back.

TAPE NUMBER: XII, SIDE ONE

MARCH 2, 1988

BASIAGO: When last we spoke, we had discussed the initial summit, so to speak, of the [United] World Federalists at Grenville Clark's family farmhouse in Dublin, New Hampshire. The 1946 meeting took you to Princeton, New Jersey. Now, was that the meeting where [Albert] Einstein appeared and excused himself, explaining, "I'll approve anything that these men decide upon"?

COUSINS: That's right.

BASIAGO: I was wondering if there was a direct connection between the world federalist organization and the universities where the atomic bomb had been developed?

COUSINS: Oh. Only by way of the men connected with the program, but not by way of university sponsorship or laboratory sponsorship. After the bomb was dropped in the early days, I received a visit from Harrison [S.] Brown, and I think Willy Higinbotham. That radiated out in a number of directions and led to the suggestion that the atomic scientists band together, which they did, the Federation of Atomic Scientists, and that in turn led to the **Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists**. Then, from other laboratories, I think English, Spoff [Spofford G.] English, was that his name? And Leo Szilard, [University of] Chicago; [James] Franck from Chicago, I believe; [Henry De Wolf] Smyth from

Princeton [University]; [Isidor I.] Rabi from Columbia [University], among others, were drawn into general discussions. It seems to me, looking back, that we went from one meeting to another. There was a great deal of intellectual ferment at the time, and all sorts of things were happening. We had a dinner at which Ben [Benjamin] Sonnenberg was the host at the Pierre Hotel. One of the persons he brought together, included in that group, was Mrs. Robert Lehman, Kitty Lehman, the daughter of Ruth Bryan Owen, the diplomat, former ambassador to Denmark, I guess. Then her home became a center, not just for meetings, but for social get-togethers. And Harrison Brown, as a matter of fact, met Kitty's sister, Rudd, and married her there. So there was a great deal of family feeling about this. What was being created was not just a group of concerned scientists and laymen but a fraternity, one that was very satisfying; we made many good friendships. I was best man at Harrison's wedding with Rudd. We summered together at Aspen [Institute for Humanistic Studies]. Leo Szilard went out there with us. And then that brought in the Chicago group, including [Mortimer J.] Adler and [Robert Maynard] Hutchins, and the old Saint John's [University] crowd. These interesting concerns and associations really dominated our horizon for maybe ten years or so.

BASIAGO: So I imagine some of the people in the humanities, such as Hutchins and Adler at the University of Chicago, were directly affiliating with the Manhattan Project scientists at that campus.

COUSINS: Yes. There was, however, something of a division between the Hutchins approach and the approach of the world federalists, or the Grenville Clark approach. They tended to regard us as minimalists. They felt that a government ought to be a government, with all the attributes thereof. We felt that the important thing was to have governance in certain areas. We feared that in the attempt to have governance in all areas, we'd lose everything. So what we sought was a limited world federation, based on common dangers and common needs. Besides, the apprehensions of people about losing sovereignty, however misplaced, were at least understandable.

BASIAGO: I found in the archival record that it was Edgar Ansel Mowrer, the foreign correspondent, who had advocated the founding of a Writers Board for World Government at the 1947 meeting at Asheville, North Carolina. Now he, of course, went back to your early days at Current History in the late 1930s. What was your association with Mowrer? It's something that we've never really discussed in detail.

COUSINS: And which I haven't thought about. But he was a very good friend. Lillian [Thompson Mowrer] was a writer

too, and he would come up to the office and we'd do brainstorming together. He was very earnest. I don't remember him ever saying anything without leaning forward in his seat. And he loved staging. He'd want to stage certain meetings in certain ways. He was one of several among that founding group: strong-minded, articulate, resolute, someone who had to be accommodated, but I think a real asset in those early days.

BASIAGO: The 1947 meeting in Asheville was addressed by Harold [E.] Stassen. Do you recall what he might have said or just generally what his association with the world federalists was?

COUSINS: He had some background here in Connecticut. I'd been the moderator of the Norwalk Town Meeting, and I invited Stassen to come to speak to the town meeting. He was not long out from the governorship. I drove him out from New York City. We were trapped in a snowstorm on the way out, and by the time we got to the meeting the people were hoarse from singing songs and waiting our arrival. So we had this survival bond. I'd invited him to speak; he knew exactly what the goals were. I don't remember what he said, but it would not be much different from what he had said on a number of other occasions, which had to do with world law as a civilizing force. He adhered pretty closely to the Grenville Clark approach.

BASIAGO: The 1948 [world federalist] meeting found you in Luxembourg. Why was Luxembourg selected? I note that that's the first European center for an organized meeting of the world federalists.

COUSINS: I didn't do the selection. I can only guess the central location of Luxembourg, the fact that like Switzerland it was fairly neutral and the host wouldn't have undue power.

BASIAGO: The archival record lists sort of an honor roll of European world federalist organizations. So far we've just discussed many of the prominent Americans, and many of the books such as those on Clark's life focus on the Americans as well. Do you recall some of the prominent European world federalists that connected with the Clark group in the late forties and early fifties?

COUSINS: Helmut Lannung, who was a member of the foreign ministry of Denmark and then became the Danish ambassador to the UN [United Nations], was one. They had some Frenchmen who had been in or near the government. They had some English members of Parliament. I think the Danish foreign minister was active at that time. We had meetings with leaders of the Danish political parties, all of which, as I remember it, were very supportive of this view. And then with the endorsements of Einstein and [Winston] Churchill, it almost seemed to us that this thing would

become full-sized by the end of the year. Even an endorsement by the **New York Times**.

BASIAGO: The declaration that was issued after the Luxembourg meeting--this was issued on September 10, 1948--was an appeal for the development of the UN into a world federal government, with power to make, enforce, and interpret world law, which we've already discussed. The second facet featured in the declaration was mentioned: "The control of atomic energy and other scientific and technological developments easily diverted to mass destruction." I've found in the archives that in collaboration with Thomas K. Finletter, who had been a special assistant to Cordell Hull, you completed an extensive analysis of the [Dean G.] Acheson-[David E.] Lilienthal report on the international control of atomic energy.

COUSINS: Which was published in the **Saturday Review [of Literature]**.

BASIAGO: Was this around 1946, when international control of atomic energy was first suggested, or later in the fifties, when the AEC [Atomic Energy Commission] was actually formed?

COUSINS: The review I did with Tom Finletter I think was in '46, maybe '45, I don't know.

BASIAGO: Was that an independent effort, or did someone

sponsor the study?

COUSINS: No, Finletter and I just did it ourselves. We did it in the form of a review of the book.

BASIAGO: Peter Goodchild writes that much of the Lilienthal report was the work of J. Robert Oppenheimer. Did you find that?

COUSINS: He was very prominent in reports issued by or close to the government. If you'd like to talk about Oppenheimer now, I'd be glad to do so. [He was] a very enigmatic figure historically, a highly rarefied intelligence, extremely self-conscious at meetings when he would speak. It almost seemed as though he would speak in a very low voice deliberately, so that people had to lean forward to hear what he had to say. It was rather magisterial, too. Whether or not he expected intellectual genuflection, he got it. But I was deeply troubled by Oppenheimer, especially when he supported the May-Johnson Bill for the military control of atomic energy. His reason for doing so was really the key to the man: Since he was close to the military, he said he would be there to protect the scientists and the country. He was very cozy with the military, very cozy with [Leslie R.] Groves. He concurred with Groves's decision to deprive Einstein of clearance on classified information on security grounds. Later, his very good friend became a sacrificial lamb, when in effect

Oppenheimer failed to defend him. And whether this gave him increased immunity or not, or whether that was the reason for it, I don't know. But I was shocked at the fact that his friend would be turned over to [Joseph R.] McCarthy-type forces at the time. While I could recognize Oppenheimer's brilliance, I didn't always admire the uses to which it was put. His brother [Frank Oppenheimer], you recall, had been declared a security risk. Whether Robert was trying to use his identification with the military as a means of distancing himself from his brother, I don't know. But his position on Einstein's access to classified information was inexcusable, and I don't care what else he did. This is not generally known, although the friend's betrayal I think is.

BASIAGO: In your meetings with Oppenheimer, did you ever get the impression that he had fully comprehended the overriding significance of the advent of atomic weapons? The historical record seems to suggest that he was of two minds. For instance, I. I. Rabi reports that at Trinity he didn't seem to lose his composure, as a number of other people had.

COUSINS: What?

BASIAGO: Well, I. I. Rabi describes Oppenheimer appearing sort of as a casual stranger as he climbed out of the bunker at Trinity.

COUSINS: Oh, I heard about that, yes.

BASIAGO: And then you have some reports of Oppenheimer, later in the fifties at parties describing the atomic bomb as the Plague of Thebes, etc. But did you ever get the impression that he had been viscerally touched by the--?

COUSINS: Well, I was at a number of meetings with him, one of which was called by Beardsley Ruml at Macy's [Department Store], in which a number of atomic scientists came together with laymen again to consider new developments and to try to plot a course. Oppenheimer didn't seem to me to be overly sophisticated about the political organization of the country or even about political developments. I had the feeling that he expected history to shape itself according to his desires. I'm not bitter about the man. I just felt that the various attempts at biography, whether in print or in TV, tended to accept his own version of who he was, rather than to be guided by what he did.

BASIAGO: I'm surprised that you portray him as someone very close to the military. We find that, I guess it wasn't the military that viewed him as a security risk, but certainly he was being investigated by the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation] during these years. Were you aware of any concern in the military about Oppenheimer, this sort of odd personality?

COUSINS: As I say, that was how he got Groves's support.

He was very close to Groves, and what the military wanted, the military got. And Groves stood by Oppenheimer in return.

BASIAGO: How close were you to the efforts around Senator Brien McMahon to ultimately get atomic energy under civilian control?

COUSINS: The reason I smile is that Brien McMahon came from Norwalk, Connecticut, too. So we had known each other quite apart from McMahon's interest in atomic energy. We spoke quite a bit during that time, even before he became chairman of the Senate [Special] Committee on Atomic Energy. He had a man on his staff by the name of Chuck Caulkins. Caulkin's name came up during the McCarthy investigation very briefly, and some of the senators expressed concern. There was a flurry over that, over Caulkins, since he had access to McMahon's papers, but nothing much came of it. McMahon was very adroit and very astute, politically. He knew Connecticut, he knew what the senator's job required. He did that job very well, especially in terms of meeting the needs of his constituents. He found himself in this very important station and was not unaware of the political advantages it conferred. But he was not very philosophical. Oppenheimer was very philosophical, almost mystical. McMahon, in dealing with atomic energy questions, was pure cold turkey--who did what and who got what.

The interesting thing that happened was that after his death--I think the year would be about 1949--Governor Chester Bowles asked me if I wanted to take his place in the Senate. He had one year to go, and Bowles said that he was talking to two men about filling the unexpired term. One was his old friend, William Benton, with whom he'd had an advertising agency--Benton and Bowles--his partner, and I was the other. I'm not sure of the year, it may have been a little later than that. But I had known Bowles, of course, and I had been the chairman of Bowles's Fact-Finding Education Commission. He got me out of a barber's chair to talk about it, as a matter of fact. I had a great deal to think about. I had always felt that the United States Senate was probably one of the finest jobs in the world. But also, that even though you might be appointed to office, you'd have to run a campaign, and stand for election, and I've never had any taste for that. Having to sling abuse and having to take it. Maybe I felt that I was above the battle, I don't know. But I had no taste for the battle, anyway. The offer was never really definite, when you think about that sort of thing. "And also I've been talking to Bill Benton about it." So perhaps even if I had been interested in it, Bowles would have decided to give it to Benton anyway. But in the context of our talk now, that came up by way of McMahon's death, which is rather

strange. He, like a number of other political people at the time, I think, developed a cancer of the throat. I forget exactly what it was, some sort of laryngeal cancer. It spread very fast. This happened to some others at the time or shortly thereafter.

BASIAGO: Do you think it's coincidence? Was that a seat of stress in their body perhaps?

COUSINS: I don't know.

BASIAGO: The Lilienthal report had concluded that international control implied an acceptance from the outset of the fact that the United States's monopoly on atomic weapons couldn't last. What did you and Finletter find?

COUSINS: There's a fatal contradiction in the Lilienthal report. On one hand, as you've just read, they recognized the monopoly would be shattered. That raised an entirely different set of questions concerning American security and world security. Obviously, you couldn't get into that kind of control unless you were prepared to give up something. But the Lilienthal report also said, as I remember it, that one of the fixed points in the thinking of the authors was that no matter what happened the United States should not lose its advantage. Or that if the treaty failed, we'd still have the edge. Well, you had to cross the Rubicon, and the moment they attached that condition to it, you knew the plan was doomed.

BASIAGO: When we last spoke, we briefly touched upon the famous April 1949 Cultural and Scientific Conference for World Peace at the Waldorf-Astoria [Hotel]. You gave your famous "Tell the Folks Back Home" speech before what was an admittedly overtly Stalinist audience. Today I'd like to fill in some of the whos, whats, and whys of that particular speech. Prior to the speech, did you receive any warning from the State Department or friends or some informed person that this would present sort of an opportunity and a need to adequately portray the democratic point of view?

COUSINS: What happened was that there was a great deal of agitated talk about this meeting long in advance. When it had been planned and announced, it was clear that it was going to try to exploit the presence of noncommunists for something that was really sponsored by people who were deep in it [communism]. I thought that they had a right to their meeting, but I also thought that labeling, honest labeling, was important, too. That was the only issue that concerned me. I thought that they ought not to make it appear to be something other than what it was. [Dmitri] Shostakovich was going to come to that, and a number of others. And that was where Lillian Hellman got some fixed ideas about me, to say the least. Harlow Shapley, the famous astronomer and good friend of mine-- I had sat next

to him a number of times at the Conference on Science, Philosophy and Religion at Columbia University. He was a good friend, also, of Henry [S.] Canby, who would come to the [**Saturday**] **Review**. I wrote to him expressing my concern. I said, as I remember, that I saw no reason why such a meeting shouldn't be held, but I did see every reason why the auspices of the meeting ought to be clearly identified. He said they told him that the meeting was not going to be rigged. He said, as I remember, "You come and speak your piece." They brought a lot of pressure on him to withdraw his invitation to me, but to his great credit Harlow didn't do that. Meanwhile, the only advice I got was to be very careful. As I remember it, I got a call from someone in the State Department--maybe it was the New York representative of the State Department--saying that we ought to have some police protection. My doctor, who was also a police surgeon, was concerned about that. Unbeknownst to me, he had arranged for the police department to have police there, just in case. I sat next to Shostakovich, as a matter of fact, on the platform. When I spoke, I looked over to one side, and I could see some policemen just offstage in the back of the hall. My talk started very slowly, and people relaxed. Then increasingly, as the purport and thrust of my talk became clear, the mood of that place changed. It was almost as

though it were being directed by some master Hollywood craftsman the way the expressions changed. Then they began to yell at me and boo me. But it was not a very long speech; I was able to get through it. Then at least some people started to throw things, and then the police stepped out and escorted me from the platform, as I remember it.

BASIAGO: Sidney Hook's Americans for Intellectual Freedom had charged--I found this in the New York Times--that two of the Soviet Union's representatives were actually secret police. You've said that a number of the people involved were deeply communist. What information were you operating on regarding that?

COUSINS: Well, I didn't hunt with Sidney Hook's crowd, of course. There's a difference, it seems to me, between allowing your whole life to be governed by anticommunism and holding onto your independence without allowing your values to become distorted. The names of the people on it were certainly evidence of what was happening. These were [communist] front names.

BASIAGO: You mentioned Lillian Hellman. She describes this event in her memoir, Scoundrel Time. What were your impressions of Lillian Hellman?

COUSINS: [laughter] An acerbic and passionate lady. A grande dame, ideologically, and a very interesting woman.

BASIAGO: Shostakovich urged "progressive artists to lead

the fight against new fascists seeking world rule." Where was Shostakovich coming from?

COUSINS: There's nothing to conceal about Shostakovich. He was a representative of Soviet society. He believed in what he said, no doubt. He was entirely in place, and I thought that what he said was appropriate to his beliefs, and perhaps appropriate to this particular occasion in terms of its sponsorship. But for an American to talk like that was something else.

BASIAGO: I believe it was the author William Golding who protested the visa ban. He had written a letter to the [London] **Times**, urging the event to go forward and for the eastern European representatives to be allowed to speak. Do you remember any other American intellectuals who took up the cause of Hellman and Golding and Shostakovich?

COUSINS: No, as a matter of fact, there was a rather conspicuous silence about the event. I tried to indicate that there's a distinction to be made between the anticommunists who were completely identified as such, Sidney Hook and Max Eastman and Eugene Lyons, and the noncommunists, those who wouldn't allow themselves to be mobilized into the kind of anticommunism that was taking an active form at that time. They certainly didn't want to be identified with those who were trying to use American intellectuals to advance the foreign policy of the Soviet

Union. I believed then, as I believe now, that it was important to reduce tensions with the Soviet Union, but I didn't think you had to become a communist in order to do it. Nor do I think you had to applaud communism in the Soviet Union or blind yourself to the police-state aspects of communism in order to recognize that we had to reduce the volatility of the relationship between the two societies. I don't think that my position has ever really been clear in the minds of many people. Some regarded me as Lillian Hellman did, as blatently and irresponsibly anticommunist. Others regarded me as someone who's naive about communism, perhaps not too far away from Lillian Hellman's own position.

BASIAGO: Joseph P. Lash had pointed out, in response to this issue over visas, the Soviet Union's resistance to offers of cultural exchanges between intellectuals of both countries. Was there an immediate, direct tie-in between this event and your later efforts to sponsor the Dartmouth [College] Conferences? Did you think, well, let's bring the issue to the Soviets on their soil? Let's see how willing they'll be to host a cultural exchange?

COUSINS: I wasn't interested in last tags or nyah-nyah-nyah, that sort of thing, or embarrassing people. You recall that my trip to the Soviet Union took place in the post-Stalin years. Eisenhower recognized the danger of a

volatile relationship between the two countries. He had had relations with some of the Russian generals himself. He knew enough about Russian history to know that, quite apart from the political turn, or the ideological turn that it took, there were reasons for the Soviet, as apart from the communist, position on matters. He felt that it was important to widen contacts between the two countries. That was the context in which I went.

BASIAGO: At the Waldorf-Astoria event in 1949, W. E. B. Du Bois spoke. I later found a reference that at this time the House Commitee on Un-American Activities had listed some of the communist front ties and cited Paul Robeson. Did you discover any connections between black civil rights leaders of that era and some of these communist-front organizations?

COUSINS: Again, we need to make distinctions. Not everyone who belonged to or was mobilized by these organizations was an enemy of the United States. It was possible to take the position that Paul Robeson did on a human level. It perhaps even required some courage for him to do so. But again, you had to make a distinction between the individual and the group that was trying to exploit him. There are a lot of people in Robeson's position--honest, intelligent, progressive, deeply concerned--who are

not frightened by labels, but who are certainly not subversive, as had been contended. It was ludicrous to raise these charges against Robeson and some of the others.

TAPE NUMBER: XII, SIDE TWO

MARCH 2, 1988

BASIAGO: I recall your perception that the world federalist movement probably didn't recover from the McCarthy era, or that at the very least, took some terrible blows during that time. I'd like to get your perspectives on--

COUSINS: Never recovered fully.

BASIAGO: --on the social forces of that era. In the early 1950s, the **New York Times** reported a speech that you had given upon the McCarthyite climate that was developing. You warned that "extreme rightists, superpatriots, and the prejudiced might constitute a Fifth Column in America, upon which the communist world would rely to do its dirty work." You warned that "despite the billions in postwar defense spending, America could not defend the nation from the psychological instability that would make it vulnerable to irrational forces." You mentioned some of the things that were going on at the time, such as indiscriminate attacks on schools, libraries, the United Nations, and UNESCO. Generally speaking, what is your interpretation of the McCarthy era and the role he might have been playing?

COUSINS: I've often wondered whether the momentum of McCarthyism surprised even McCarthy. McCarthy as a product I think was perhaps 40 percent Joe McCarthy and 60 percent

Roy [M.] Cohn. When some of the things that Cohn pushed him into seemed to capture the headlines, McCarthy knew that he was on a fast track, one that he gloried in. The deeper he got into it, the more Cohn would enable him to capitalize on the opposition. His power became such that even Eisenhower hesitated to confront him head-on. I spoke to the president about that at one time, as a matter of fact. This was in connection with Cohn and [G. David] Schine's expedition abroad, where they were on a book-burning mission, in effect, listing all the communist books that were on the USIA [United States Information Agency] library shelves, or what they described as communist books. Just a broad sweep of the brush--didn't make any difference. Then the U.S. Army was brought into it in terms of the fact that it was supplying so-called communist books to its soldiers. I'll come back to all that in a moment, because that involves Senator [Robert A.] Taft. But McCarthy gobbled up the stage directions that Cohn kept feeding him, and got the headlines, and found himself with a great deal more support than he ever dreamt existed out there. And a lot of cheap applause for what he was doing. But Eisenhower, when I spoke to the president about this, said that he felt the time would come when McCarthy would stumble badly. Meanwhile, Eisenhower said, "I'm not going to get into a gutter fight with this man now, but

there will come a time--" And the time did come. It was a frightening experience while it happened, and it brought out a great deal of the latent forces that were a carryover from the war. We've gone through several similar episodes since, but I don't think anything that had the impact that McCarthyism had then.

I had only one personal encounter with McCarthy face-to-face, and that was a rather amusing one. I was in the Senate--in the Capitol--and I got into the Senate elevator without noticing that it said, "Senators Only." I just walked in. The elevator operator closed the gate, looked at me, and he said, "Excuse me sir, this elevator's for senators only." I said, "I'm terribly sorry." He opened the door, and I started to leave. A senator pulled me back. He said, "You'll be my guest." As the elevator started up, he held out his hand. He said, "My name's McCarthy, what's yours?" I told him, and he said, "Well, I guess it's too late for either of us to back out now." [laughter]

BASIAGO: You've described some of the things that history records of this era--the forces of personality, the promotion of McCarthy's career, and the irrational forces that were being whipped up. But what I'm wondering is sort of this unique perspective that the archival record gives to your views at that time, your thoughts about what might

have really been going on. In 1952 you were speaking before eight hundred librarians in New Jersey, and you told them that the communist strategy called for "collaboration with the extreme right wing to do its dirty work, and counted on superpatriots to destroy the American middle ground, to deprive America of its strength, which is its confidence in our government, our community, our neighbors, and ourselves."

COUSINS: These were historical reflections. You see, the strategy of the revolutionary, the communist revolutionary--these are the standard tactics--would be to combine with the other extreme against the middle. When you destroy the middle, you've increased your strength.

BASIAGO: So you suspected at the time that McCarthy might have been a Soviet agent? Is that going too far?

COUSINS: No, I don't think that. When you say he was an agent, that means that he consciously did their bidding. I had no such information to that effect. But I think that was the effect of McCarthy.

BASIAGO: Oh, so you were sort of warning what this climate might lead to, in terms of--

COUSINS: Well, I was speaking historically about revolutions and counterrevolutions, and how communists came to power, and how the extreme right, at the stage in that procession--whether it recognized it or not--had a role to

play in destroying the middle ground.

BASIAGO: On June 21, 1952, in Philadelphia, you were elected president of the United World Federalists [UWF], succeeding Alan Cranston. You mentioned that the world was shopping for a revolution, and that the United States was in a position to put up its own flag to counter Russia's world-revolutionary flag, which was being described as the best and only available banner. What I find interesting about this period is how this was contemporaneous with Adlai [E.] Stevenson's campaigns for the presidency. Were there any areas of intersection between his drives for the presidency in 1952 and '56 and the world federalist organizers, around Grenville Clark and yourself and Alan Cranston and company?

COUSINS: Well, we're dealing with many disparate elements here. You began by describing the climate in 1952; you referred to an editorial in which I said the world is shopping for a revolution. Perhaps a little stage-setting is necessary at this point before we go on.

That period was the high point in the revolutionary surge against colonialism in the postwar world. Many nations were coming into independence at the time. And there was a competition between the United States and the Soviet Union for a world balance of power, as there is today. But at that time the world balance of power was

connected to the independence movement of so many nations in Africa and Asia. Social and economic and not just national questions were bound up in this vast upheaval. It seemed to me at the time that the United States was not very responsive to these issues, which is to say the attempt to appeal to the majority. We were seeking world balance of power on a much more limited front. Military alliances, and so forth, NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization], SEATO [Southeast Asia Treaty Organization]. That didn't necessarily identify us with the majority. The Stevenson campaign was coincidental.

I had met Stevenson at the home of Edison and Jane [Warner] Dick, in Lake Forest, Chicago. He had been in the State Department at the time and represented us abroad. I liked the man. He had a very lively intellect and [was] a good listener. We swapped yarns. I saw him several times. And then, after the nomination, I was talking to Eddie Dick, Edison Dick, of the Dick Dictagraph, I think it's called, the machine company--Dictaphone. He said, "What are you going to do for Adlai?" I said, "I'd do anything that he wants me to do." He said, "Are you serious about that?" I said, "Yes." The next day, I went I think it was probably to the weekly or biweekly meeting of the American Civil Liberties Union, of which I was a member of the national board. I was called out of the

meeting. Adlai Stevenson was on the phone. He said, "Eddie Dick tells me that you can be had." I said, "You've got me." [laughter] He says, "Come on out. Come to Saint Louis, I'll send a car for you. We'll have a good talk."

Within a few days, I went out to Saint Louis, and there was a car waiting for me. It took me to the governor's mansion in Springfield, Illinois, and I had dinner with him that night. He put me up at the house. We didn't say much that night, just swapped yarns about various things; he loved stories. The next morning, he drove me out to a little hilltop on the plains outside Springfield. It wasn't more than a hundred and fifty feet high, I guess, or maybe two hundred feet high. It was a solitary hilltop on the plains. We walked to the top of it, and he said, "Lincoln loved to come out here and just reflect on things." He said, "I'm not going to have the time to do that in this campaign. I'd like to delegate you to be my hilltop representative and tell me what you think about life, about the future of this country, and see if we can't translate that into some speeches." Well, I've got a built-in hilltop, so I went back to New York and started to write speeches for him for the campaign. I'm not sure that I helped him very much. As a matter of fact, I suspect that some of my speeches may have hurt him politically because I was writing then about nuclear weapons and about

the dangers to the United States of proceeding along this course. At that time, as now, anything that seemed to suggest cutting back or not making the most of weaponry was seized upon as being opposed to the security of the United States. I was opposed to the development of the hydrogen bomb. I didn't see that it made any sense--that it contributed anything to our military power--and he agreed. That speech was very costly to him.

BASIAGO: You mentioned--regarding McCarthyism, going back a little bit--that there was a tie-in there to Senator Taft.

COUSINS: Yes. Thanks largely to Cohn and Schine, a list of books had been released which were written by so-called communist authors. [laughter] Yankee from Olympus, as I remember, the biography of Chief Justice [Charles E.] Hughes, by Catherine Drinker Bowen. A number of other lists. I went down to Washington. I had known Martha [Bowers] Taft, who was a reader of the Saturday Review. She'd written to us about some things. She arranged for me to see the senator [Robert A. Taft]. We got along pretty well, and I came to admire him. I thought he was intellectually honest, and that if he saw facts that ran counter to what he had been talking about, he would have enough integrity to admit it. I gave him the facts on the book issue, and he decided that he was going to try to

reverse the ban. He took me down to meet his colleagues in the Senate and led the fight against it. And on the United Nations (he had been an opponent of the UN), at the end he made one of the best speeches in defense of the UN that I had ever heard. We got along pretty well.

BASIAGO: There are some individuals who we find entering the picture, the world federalist picture, during and after your presidency in 1952. I don't believe they were among Clark's forty-eight original guests at the Dublin meeting, but let's take, for instance, William O. Douglas. He seems like an appropriate person to talk about when you mention people like Hughes and Adlai Stevenson. What was his level of involvement with the movement?

COUSINS: Stevenson admired Grenville Clark, and that was easy to understand, because Stevenson was a progressive gradualist. He believed in orderly processes, but he didn't minimize his goals. There was a certain manner that went along with Stevenson, Learned Hand, Augustus [N.] Hand, and Grenville Clark. It was a sort of an intellectual elite. When I use the term elite, I use it in the best sense. But Stevenson, like James T. Shotwell, felt that while federalist goals were not only defensible but essential, that there was a timetable that had to be respected. And that (to use the old cliché) "Politics is the art of the possible." So while Stevenson's close

friends were federalists, the man himself never spoke under a federalist banner, though he would speak to people under that banner. We regarded him as an ally, rather than as a partisan.

BASIAGO: So are you describing William O. Douglas in that same category?

COUSINS: No, just Stevenson.

BASIAGO: Do you recall Douglas's involvement with the world federalists?

COUSINS: It was peripatetic, as I remember it. He'd come in and out. He was a loner in the sense that his speeches on the subject would surprise even us. He did speak at some meetings, as I remember it, but I don't recall his having spoken at a convention of the federalists. Do you have any--?

BASIAGO: Well, I find him in 1954 on the United World Federalist board. I imagine that might have been an honorific position.

COUSINS: That's right.

BASIAGO: We find Clark, William O. Douglas, Oscar Hammerstein II--

COUSINS: Yes, yes.

BASIAGO: What were his activities for the world federalists?

COUSINS: Oscar Hammerstein?

BASIAGO: Yeah. [laughter]

COUSINS: He was great. He wrote shows. He did one called **The Myth that Threatens the World**, which was put on in a Broadway theater, highly professional. He used people from the **South Pacific** cast to put on a series of skits.

BASIAGO: I've seen that play mentioned several times in the literature. What was the general scenario?

COUSINS: It was a very fast moving series of presentations, where you had two-minute talks interposed with dramatic sketches. And also some songs were written for the occasion. Oscar had commandeered all the talent. The federalists, especially through the Writers Board [for World Government], supplied some of the scripts for the straight talks. It was a beautifully effective production that traveled to other cities, but not with the same cast of characters, obviously.

BASIAGO: This brings up a point that I've thought about as I've been reading all of the literature about the world federalists, which is funding. Were there any foundations that were providing financial support for promoting that show, or airline tickets for meetings, or renting halls, or anything like that?

COUSINS: No.

BASIAGO: It was all out-of-pocket among the members themselves? I was just wondering because of Clark's role

in drafting the will of Andrew Carnegie and of course--

COUSINS: He never got that money from Carnegie. We had hoped we might get. Clark was hopeful of shaking loose some real money from those foundations, because he spoke their language. He was a trustee of the Harvard [University] Corporation, old school tie, everything. But apparently it didn't come through.

BASIAGO: Another individual who I find on the board of the UWF in 1954 was Florence [Jaffray] Harriman, a former minister to Norway. Would that be someone of the New York Harriman family?

COUSINS: Yes. Her home in Washington, like Kitty Lehman's apartment on Park Avenue in New York, became sort of a social headquarters. We had a lot of meetings at that place. Dolly was a good supporter in every way, financial and moral.

BASIAGO: Another individual during that time would be Walter [P.] Reuther, president of the CIO [Congress of Industrial Organizations].

COUSINS: Yes. Walter was very straightforward. There wasn't a thing that I recall asking him to do that he didn't do. And that carried through to SANE, the Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy. And he had me to come down to speak several times before his board in Detroit, at the automobile workers [United Automobile Workers], and I got

to meet Victor [G. Reuther], his brother, who was a federalist, too. These are good people.

BASIAGO: He, of course, had historic significance in negotiating for the United Auto Workers unprecedented benefits, and as a result, General Motors--

COUSINS: Could you excuse me for a moment? [tape recorder off]

BASIAGO: We were discussing some of the United World Federalist board members, one of whom was Walter Reuther. I mentioned that as a negotiator for the United Auto Workers, he had achieved unprecedented benefits for the employees of General Motors, and that year General Motors had had unprecedented profits, so there's sort of a positive feedback effect. Was there any view, with him or other world federalists, that sort of a new industrial era was dawning globally that would lift the standard of living to such a degree that it would require a sort of political--?

COUSINS: I had no discussions with him that would throw light on that. Like you, all I knew is what his position was. But I had no direct discussions with him of that nature. I went to his home several times and met his wife. He questioned me about aspects of federalism and in a general way about the Review. He was a very congenial man. We were good friends, but we never exchanged ideas on

that level. Victor was the philosopher of the family.

BASIAGO: Other members at that time, of course, we find Leo [M.] Cherne and Herbert [L.] Block. We find several actors, such as Henry Fonda and Eddie Albert. What were their activities with the world federalists?

COUSINS: Henry [Fonda] was a member. I think he was married for a while to Oscar Hammerstein's daughter [Alice Hammerstein] or at least went out with her for a while. Eddie Albert was an enthusiastic young federalist, and a regular guy, very helpful.

BASIAGO: Telford Taylor--

COUSINS: Yes. Bob [Robert] Ryan was supportive of the federalist position.

BASIAGO: Robert Ryan, the actor? So was their tie primarily social? They would attend functions, and--Telford Taylor, the chief of council for the United Nations Commission for the Investigation of War Crimes at [the] Nuremberg [War Crime Trials], was another individual active in the world federalist movement. I'm curious about the degree to which the outcome of the Nuremberg Trials might have shaped the world law movement.

COUSINS: It had an effect on the thinking of individuals. I know I was affected by it, and I wrote about it. Telford Taylor joined the law firm of Paul, Weiss, Wharton, Rifkind, and Garrison, which was the law

firm that represented the **Saturday Review**. John [F.] Wharton was the lawyer of the **Saturday Review**--my personal lawyer--and he would invite Taylor to dinner a number of times, because Wharton strongly supported the position of the **Saturday Review** in these matters. Wharton was a remarkable man.

BASIAGO: You mentioned that when the United Nations got around to working on a draft of a code, an international legal code based on the Nuremberg principles--I guess of individual responsibility, that agents of aggressor nations could not be forgiven for their actions--that the United States refused to ratify it, arguing that it would be unwise to put individual Americans under this kind of legal scenario. And you ended the essay by asking rhetorically whether it would be more practical to wait until one billion human lives had been expunged before we decided that something ought to be done about the principle of individual responsibility and make real the mandate of Nuremberg. Were you suggesting that world leaders should be put under, in effect, a legal system in which they could be tried for developing, possessing, or stockpiling, or using nuclear weapons?

COUSINS: Yes.

TAPE NUMBER: XIII, SIDE ONE

MARCH 29, 1988

BASIAGO: Today let's talk about SANE, the Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy. SANE grew out of concern over the effects of above-ground nuclear weapons testing. I found it interesting that in August of 1956 a small group of professors at Washington University in Saint Louis, notably Barry Commoner, approached you and showed you scientific papers on radioactive fallout. They pointed up the danger that the nation's milk supply was being contaminated, and, of course, via that, the bones and teeth of American youth. Who joined Commoner in the group, why did they approach you, and upon what evidence did they base their claims?

COUSINS: It may be useful first to establish the context. Ever since the first bomb over Hiroshima--we've discussed this before--the Saturday Review [of Literature] became something of a clearing post for information, an exchange post of ideas, as well as a gathering center for scientists who were eager to reach the public but also were making connections among themselves. We had a way of reaching the public. If you will go back to the editorials that appeared during that time, we did try to get into all the issues that spun off from that original event at Hiroshima. Then in 1952 there's the candidacy of Adlai

[E.] Stevenson. And the scientists-- We were all trying very hard to reach the political leaders, to get them to recognize that the matters which were then being discussed as being a prime concern were really only intermediate issues. Things were happening there that were going to shape the course of the next fifty years, especially with respect to the development of nuclear weapons and an uncontrolled nuclear arms race. That was the time, back there in the late forties and early fifties, to stop it. Then came the hydrogen bomb in '52 and '53, and the testing, and then the fallout, the Dragon in the Pacific, Earle [E.] Reynolds and his tests in the **Phoenix** [Reynolds's ship].

BASIAGO: The **Phoenix**, uh-huh.

COUSINS: The Marshall Islanders, and this new word, or new concept, began to come into the public consciousness: the fact that it was not just a matter of setting off a big firecracker, but of bombs that spewed out poison that contaminated the bones of human beings and ticked away for years. We are talking about radioactive half-life, a force that would retain its potency for thousands of years, something entirely new. And so we were ushered into this new world, with semantics of its own and with issues that were almost beyond comprehension. It was inevitable that there would be a response.

We, the **Saturday Review**, became something, as I say, of an exchange post, as well as a radiating center. So in this context it was natural that Barry Commoner should get in touch with me, which he did. I went out to George Washington [University] in Saint Louis, saw the evidence, and wrote about it. We lived with great intensity. Seemingly month by month things would happen that would not only not be reassuring but which would increase the intensity. Because what we were dealing with was an escalating situation. We only had a limited amount of time to change the direction of events before those events would sweep us past the point of no return. The thing that obsessed us perhaps most of all was this clock ticking away, symbolized by the clock on the front page of the **Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists**. Fallout was not just a matter of having something happen and sweeping it up. It was a matter of having radioactive materials get into the water tables, get into the life chain, and then having to clean it out. Well, it seemed to us that politicians who are trained to think in terms of two years or four years, or their own term of office, were incapable of dealing with problems that had to do with the next two thousand years, or even the next twenty years. Therefore, we had to try to create a public opinion that would force them to recognize these as present imperatives.

At that time, in '52, I was asked by Adlai Stevenson if I would help him. I think I already told you about going out to that place on the plains outside Springfield, where he said that [Abraham] Lincoln used to come and climb a hillock. You had this long, long view of the plains, even though this particular mound was only a couple hundred feet high. But everything else around was low and flat, so it seemed as though you were atop the world. He said that he couldn't go out there to think, but he wanted someone to do that, and that was my job. One of the things I thought about had to do with the role of a candidate in educating the American people to the issues, whether or not he would win. It was at that time that the thermonuclear weapon, posing these great dangers--not just in terms of devastation, but in terms of fallout--had just become a reality. By getting into the testing of that, there were people around Stevenson who felt that politically this would be a very poor thing to do--that it would alarm the American people, and the American people didn't want to be alarmed, they wanted to be safe. That [Dwight D.] Eisenhower represented safety and comfort and assurance. [They] didn't want Stevenson to rattle the chains in the atomic barrel. But, as I say, win or lose, I thought Stevenson had the obligation to hit as hard as he could on the issues as he understood them. Some of the people

around Stevenson later blamed me for the fact that he lost the presidency. I don't know how they can say that, but in any event it is true that I urged him, with everything I had, to get into this fight, and to use the candidacy as an arena for bringing these issues front and center, as he did. It was during that campaign that I met Barry Commoner in '52. We didn't work actively together for some time, but I kept track of him. Then came his findings about radioactive strontium[-90] turning up in plants, in milk, and in the teeth of children. So we were really dealing there with nothing that was new; it was really a continuum from '45.

BASIAGO: I noted that when Lawrence [D.] Scott approached you to join him in the Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy, you made two requests: one was that Clarence [E.] Pickett join you; and two was that the issue essentially be depoliticized. That instead, the clergy should lead the moral quest for the end to nuclear testing.

COUSINS: Where'd you get that information?

BASIAGO: That's from a doctoral thesis by Milton [S.] Katz, one of your historians--one of your biographers. You had mentioned how you'd been credited with harming Stevenson's chances politically by bringing up the issue of--

COUSINS: The thermonuclear bomb.

BASIAGO: Yeah. I'm wondering why right after that you sort of-- Were you worried that politics would harm the disarmament movement as well?

COUSINS: In forming the Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy?

BASIAGO: Well, when the committee was being formed, it seemed that you wanted to tone down the political ramifications. That was your second--

COUSINS: Yes. There was no connection with Stevenson. It seemed to me that the nuclear issue transcended politics. It was very easy for people to associate such issues with politics--"peacemongers"--that sort of thing. I felt that SANE's mission was to cut across every single political strand and weave a pattern of its own. We did, in fact, get business leaders, labor leaders, church leaders, civic groups, women's groups, all of them, under that banner.

BASIAGO: I'm just wondering if that came out of a discovery you made that partisan politics wasn't the environment in which the quest to ban the bomb should be carried out.

COUSINS: Well, I don't think I was making any fresh discoveries, but my quest was to communicate with people who had different affiliations, contrasting affiliations or opinions. That's just a matter of personal style.

BASIAGO: I'm fascinated by the confrontation you had with

Willard [F.] Libby and, to a greater degree, with Edward Teller.

COUSINS: Yes.

BASIAGO: When Commoner and company brought you the news about the strontium problem, Libby sought to mitigate their claims. In fact, in May, 1957, he wrote the **Saturday Review**, seeking to demonstrate that the risk from nuclear testing at the present rate was small. He believed that the small controlled risk from weapons testing was far outweighed by the defense effort's interest and the quest for survival of the free world. How was Libby able to assess the risk from above-ground testing as being rather small, whereas Commoner's group was highly alarmed by their findings?

COUSINS: Again, a matter of context. Libby was looking at the effects of testing, whether in terms of the dusting of crops, or ingestion, or strontium, which was turning up in the bones of children. Looking at that in comparative terms, suppose two hundred thousand people, twenty thousand, two thousand, were affected. How does this compare with the large number of people who are going to be affected if his assumptions were right about the weakness of the United States? It's very easy, when you take a position based on what you think is necessary for the defense of America, to have everything pale into

insignificance. Commoner was looking at this as a doctor has to look at a patient. The individual's important. You don't take a triage approach to a patient. What you say is, let's do the best we can for this particular individual. Or if someone is suffering, let's try to get at the cause of the suffering and eliminate it. So everything depended on the lens through which you were looking. And the defense lens was one, of course, where nothing was as important as the things you wanted to attach importance to--where you could arbitrarily rule out anything else because of what you conceived to be the greater danger. The lens through which Barry Commoner and his associates were looking had to do with specific things which, in themselves, represented a great cause and were not to be brushed aside because of someone else's speculations about what the national security required.

BASIAGO: I'm fascinated by the role language played in the statements of Libby and of Teller. You're suggesting that they were essentially scientifically biased, because they had a political commitment to the defense establishment. I'm fascinated by a claim that Teller made, along with Albert [L.] Latter of the Rand Corporation, in an early 1958 edition of **Life** magazine, when this furor was at full heat. Latter and Teller claimed that the risk from nuclear testing need not necessarily be harmful--in fact, there was

no risk--and that nuclear testing may conceivably be helpful. I'm trying to put that into perspective. How could nuclear testing conceivably be helpful?

COUSINS: Over the years, Teller has come up with some bizarre notions to justify large budgets that would be going into military science. Once you have a device or an idea and someone comes forward with arguments against it, the natural tendency is to downplay those arguments and to support your own. So you get a great deal of tilting. But if you're interested in the measured truth of a situation--where you were not going to listen to advocates who had a stake in a certain program, or opponents who had a stake in defeating it, that would benefit themselves-- [If you] just looked at this thing in terms of public policy and what it would contribute to the security or insecurity of the United States and other values, you'd come up with a different answer. I don't doubt that there were some people who were opposed to any development of weaponry just out of a dislike of war. You had a pure pacifist position which respected men like Clarence Pickett would take. And they were entitled to express their opinion, too. But the effort to weigh all these factors, and then decide how they balanced out, was a legitimate one.

Libby was committed to the AEC [Atomic Energy Commission]. Libby was a very respected scientist; he'd

been here at Caltech [California Institute of Technology] and had a very good record. Teller was the one who conceived of the fact that you could make a superbomb, a thermonuclear bomb, and use a small bomb as a matchstick to ignite one that would be a thousand times more powerful. These were people who were justifying their position, doing everything they possibly could to win the American people over to their position. They could rationalize their beliefs in terms of the national security.

If you accept the position that the security of the American people depended on being stronger than anyone else in the world, and then didn't look too carefully at what was involved in the weapons that you wanted for that purpose, it would be easy to agree with them. Strength is always a very seductive argument. We're going to negotiate out of strength, that sort of thing--proceed out of strength, the other side understands only our strength. These are approaches that a lot of people readily accept. Libby and Teller were appealing, I think, to this ready response for anything calling for greater strength. But if your context was not just what was going to happen to the United States, but what was going to happen to human beings on this planet, where it might lead, and what its ultimate effect may be, then you might come up with a different answer.

BASIAGO: When Teller, in particular, spoke of "clean bombs" and "sunshine units," I'm wondering if he was involved in some doublethink there? [laughter] Or newspeak, if you will?

COUSINS: I confess that I've met very few truly evil people in this world--very few truly evil--but I had that feeling about Teller. From the first time I met him, that he was one of these. His brilliance in science was not matched by a concern for the effects of his science. If something could be done scientifically, that to him, I thought, was the most important thing in the world. It would strengthen his laboratories, keep a lot of scientists busy at their desks. It would be good for science as he saw it. But whether this would also be good for the human condition on earth was something else. He would talk about the effects of radiation in "sunshine units" as though he were dealing with the ultimate in human refinement, and that is a form of evil, too. I found myself juxtaposed against Teller at that point in a number of ways--politically, philosophically, scientifically, organizationally. It almost seemed that wherever I would turn he would be on the opposite side. All this came together in a grand confrontation on the issue of nuclear testing, where he also said that the amount of harm that was represented by the radiation was no greater than you

would have on the radium dial on your watch. Well, it was a good analogy, but the analogy fell down when you recognized that the only way you could compare the two was by actually ingesting that radium. Because people were ingesting the radioactive materials in their food. And so I felt that there was a basic intellectual dishonesty. [Leo] Szilard disagreed with me about Teller personally. He thought Teller, a fellow Hungarian, was deluded perhaps, self-delusion. But he didn't see him in the same evil terms that I did. He felt that he was a charming man. Maybe he was, but I don't think that charm and evil are mutually exclusive.

BASIAGO: Those were the insights into his character that I was searching for. I noted that Libby would later recant his position. By 1959, he was voicing a real concern over contamination resulting from nuclear test explosions. He cited evidence--

COUSINS: I respected Libby. He wrote to the **Saturday Review**, as you say, and we had a good relationship. He was intellectually honest.

BASIAGO: I also found some evidence that a few individuals joined you in an attempt to discredit Teller's claims about safe nuclear energy. Was there sort of an alliance of leaders there that operated privately to arrange some sort of public clarification of Teller's position?

COUSINS: Whenever we met, as I say, the number one subject was: who was this man who was running around the country, using his prestige in connection with the bomb, to push the country into policies that were, as we saw them, very dangerous? [Albert] Einstein was terribly distressed about Teller capitalizing on his role in the development of the thermonuclear bomb to create public policy. Einstein's frame of reference was entirely different. Teller was thinking in terms of numbers and weapons, and Einstein was thinking in terms of effects and where the human species was going.

BASIAGO: Was there some alliance between yourself and Hubert [H.] Humphrey and Carey McWilliams and others?

COUSINS: Walter [P.] Reuther, especially.

BASIAGO: Regarding Teller?

COUSINS: Yes. And [James B.] Carey, another prominent union leader. These were favorite subjects, because these were the most important subjects of the time. Teller was identified with everything that had to do with accumulation and monopoly, rather than control.

BASIAGO: I'm fascinated by [Albert] Schweitzer's position on Teller. And also, I'd like to get some clarifications of the events surrounding his "Declaration of Conscience" that you sought from him. Schweitzer felt that Teller was the evil genie to whom President Eisenhower and [John

Foster] Dulles had bowed. To Schweitzer, he was the one who would influence them to shatter the London conference, which had been going along all right under the direction of [Harold] Stassen, during July 1957. If Schweitzer had such passionate feelings regarding Teller and the whole issue of contamination stemming from the tests, why was he at first reticent to issue a public statement?

COUSINS: The reticence was by no means a limited matter. It ranged over a very broad area and had a significant, it seems to me, background. He had come to Lambaréné [Gabon] to get away from the sound and the fury of contemporary life, especially as it concerned politics. He went off to Africa. He shook his head when I first brought up the nuclear matter. He felt his voice would lose all its effectiveness if he ever got into this thing. And yet he was interested in hearing about it. As I wrote in my book, little by little with the materials that were sent to him--this was reflected in his letters--there was a 180-degree turn, from someone who felt that he should have no part in it, to someone who felt that everyone, everywhere in the world, had a vital part to play in this great fight.

BASIAGO: I'm also interested in your relationship, at this time, to Linus [C.] Pauling. Now, was he operating on a second track, or were you collaborating in terms of his campaign to get the scientists to sign a petition?

COUSINS: It was a separate track. I had no direct contact with Pauling until the Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy had been in existence for a couple of years at least, maybe longer. He succeeded me, I think, as chairman of the committee. Or maybe he came after [Benjamin] Spock, I don't know.

BASIAGO: Well, I know in 1967 he requested that you be a cochairman, I believe, along with Pickett, when Spock's--

COUSINS: You've got the documents on that; my memory's a little faulty.

BASIAGO: So during this time, really, was your first involvement with Pauling when he was called before the [Thomas J.] Dodd committee [Senate Internal Security Subcommittee] in 1960?

COUSINS: Possibly.

BASIAGO: Did you later collaborate in any disarmament activity? I know that his petition drive in 1958 was mirrored in 1981-82, around the time of the Bilateral [Nuclear Weapons] Freeze, when there was another drive to get world scientists to support the freeze.

COUSINS: As you say, we were running on different tracks; I hope they were parallel.

BASIAGO: When Pauling was asked by the Dodd committee to discuss others who were involved with him at that time, he refused, stating that those names named would be used for

reprisals against idealistic, high-minded workers for peace, and because it might dissuade others from advocating peace. Who were some of the others he was protecting? I want to clarify what individuals were working with Pauling?

COUSINS: I don't know.

BASIAGO: You mentioned sort of the distinction between the radical pacifist wing of the disarmament movement and the internationalists--men, I guess, who came from the world federalist camp. How well did you know A. [Abraham] J. Muste?

COUSINS: Pretty well.

BASIAGO: Let me just say that Muste gave the world federalists and the atomic scientists little support. He said that world government seemed to be a way to impose peace, rather than growing out of it. He noted how the pacifists took a functionalist rather than a federalist approach to international problems. How did you view Muste and his branch of peace activism?

COUSINS: I had great respect for Muste. He was the grand old man of pacifism. I was not a pacifist; I'm not a pacifist now. I can't take an absolutist position and say there is nothing I would fight for or that there are no circumstances under which it is necessary for a country to try to defend itself or retain its freedom. The atomic bomb has muddied those waters, of course, and old

distinctions which could readily be made are not so easy to make now. But at that time, while I respected his position of pacifism, it was not one that I held. I think that Muste, recognizing that we were not pacifists, found it difficult to embrace us.

BASIAGO: Muste and those in his group asserted that justice, not force, would be the primary element for international order. He commented that, "We shall be well advised to concentrate on the economic, cultural, and spiritual conditions of peace, rather than the legal and military." How would those sort of conditions be fostered without a concern for the legal and military? I'm just wondering how, as the SANE--

COUSINS: It's the old debate between structure and function. It is true, as he said, that habits of peace generate institutions of peace, but how can you create habits of peace unless you have the means for peace? Our reading of history was that it was necessary to create a form; it was necessary to define the rules of the game, it was necessary to have enforcement. Habits of peace, like acts of peace, took place inside such a structure. The fact that we were federalists was evidence of our commitment to that particular principle. If Muste's ideas had prevailed at the time of 1783, 1787, there would have been no United States. What the American founding fathers

said was that you get war because you lack the machinery which makes peace possible. You don't have the conditions of peace, you don't have the forms in which peace can assert itself. That, at least, was our theology. And it brought us into sharp conflict with men like Muste, who didn't recognize that even between friends you could have hostile situations, if the circumstances pushed them in those directions. So we were concerned with the circumstances which made for peace. We didn't think that peace was just a matter of asserting purity of heart, any more than you could feed yourself by having a pure heart. You had to go out and get food, you had to prepare the food. Someone had to make sure that the food was not contaminated. You had to have a whole structure of society to support life. So we had a difference of opinion on that, but I respected him.

BASIAGO: In 1957, when you joined Pickett, I imagine a Friend, a number of the [Society of] Friends, would represent more the Muste position. Were there plans to sort of ameliorate these distinctions and disagreements within the structure of SANE?

COUSINS: There was, it seems to me, a tacit understanding, strengthened by mutual respect, that we would confine ourselves to certain issues on which we could agree. I had a very deep affection for Clarence Pickett, and I saw

him as representing a point of view that was necessary in any rounded equation leading to peace. He represented a certain sector and represented it very well. We had no problems at all--doctrinal problems or philosophical problems. There were clear-cut issues on which we agreed. No nation had the right to contaminate the air that belonged to the world's people. It was a species of arrogance for any one nation to ignore the rights of others just because they didn't have power. What was required was to stop these obscene acts, which is how we saw testing of nuclear weapons. On those issues there was no difficulty in agreeing. That in fact was the function of SANE, to draw together people who could unite on that issue.

BASIAGO: SANE proposed that President Eisenhower go before the United Nations [UN] with recommendations such as that all nuclear test explosions, missiles, and space satellites be considered apart from other disarmament problems; that all nuclear test explosions by all countries be stopped immediately, under a UN inspection system; and that all missiles and space satellites be put under UN control, with the pooling of world scientific personnel. Did you ever directly discuss these proposals with President Eisenhower? I know in the discussion of the Dartmouth [College] Conferences, you mentioned that President Eisenhower had suggested some pathways to you.

COUSINS: I can't speak historically here, because these things are still perhaps too vague, but I can just give you my impressions. President Eisenhower went through a number of different stages in the presidency. In the first stage, he recognized that military men were not really qualified to govern, a position he had long held. He took pains to hand out franchises--one in foreign policy to Dulles, one in domestic policy to Sherman Adams. He would represent integrity in government and also would oversee what was happening, getting the best advice he could. The best advice that he received at the time favored development of nuclear weapons, of which testing was an integral part.

Phase two of Eisenhower came when Dulles became ill, and it became necessary for him to become his own president. When Sherman Adams had accepted some favors, it became necessary for Eisenhower to become directly concerned with domestic policy as well. This led into the next phase, when he actually was president, by which time it was too late, really, to do too much about it.

But in the latter days of his administration--the last six months--he began to think in terms of basic principles. Here he felt that the security of the United States depended on the control of these weapons, rather than on the pursuit of these weapons. He was very strong in support of ideas of world law and the structures that

would make it possible. He'd always had a tendency in this direction, anyway. But now, in the light of his own experience, these things became strengthened and tended to fall in place. It would not be inconsistent, in that light, for him to modify some of the views of Dulles and the others, Libby, with respect to nuclear power. But I never directly asked him, so far as I remember, about fallout. I think we stayed with the bigger picture and about U.S.-Soviet relations.

TAPE NUMBER: XIV, SIDE ONE

MAY 9, 1988

BASIAGO: About SANE, the Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy, one thing that I was interested in was the mission of the organization as you saw it and sought to develop it. SANE is often treated in histories as an organization which sought to, as the slogan goes, "Ban the Bomb." I wonder if we could go a little bit deeper than that in terms of its mission as an organization. I noted that in 1960 you described SANE's mission as that of strengthening America's relationship with other peoples through the creation of a nuclear policy that can serve as a basis for world leadership.

COUSINS: That was the aim. You have also asked about genesis and initial purpose. There's a tendency to think of SANE as one thinks of most organizations, whether [United World] Federalists or the Fellowship of Reconciliation. Which is to say, as a basic long-term need, an organization that would educate the public, converting people into members who could work for long-term policy. This was not what happened with SANE. We had a specific goal. It was finite with respect to purpose and time. It was certainly not to be a membership organization. The need for it was related to nuclear testing and the prospect that President [John F.] Kennedy

[JFK], if he saw enough public support, might propose such a treaty. That was the very well defined objective. It seemed to us at the time that you do this, not by creating a new citizens' organization, but rather by mobilizing existing organizations, even though their stated purpose might not have anything to do with nuclear testing.

So we conceived of SANE as a campaign committee. This meant that you would want to bring together representatives of leading organizations--political, educational, professional, business, labor. What we did, therefore, was to try to create a committee of committees. In this way, we got Walter [P.] Reuther and [James B.] Carey, representing labor, business leaders, the League of Women Voters, other women's organizations, the world federalists, the American Association for the United Nations, as it was then called, mobilizing them to achieve a specific objective. The committee, therefore, consisted of heads of committees. Such, at least, was the original--both the concept and indeed the implementation. As it developed, it took on a life of its own. After the [nuclear] test ban was achieved, I felt that this organization, having accomplished its purpose, should disband.

But what had happened was that in the very act of working for a test ban it created a specific constituency of its own apart from the organizations. We had run an ad

something along the lines of: we're facing a crisis unlike any crisis we've ever faced before. That ran in the New **York Times**--we discussed this once before--and I think it pulled in about $55,000 or some very generous sum, far beyond the cost. People who read that ad around the country wanted to do the same thing in their own communities. So before we knew it, we had gone beyond an organization of organizations to an organization of individuals and small organizations, local organizations. The impetus that that created led many people in the group to feel that there were related objectives, and this was an instrument more powerful, perhaps, than any that had been created so far, and that it ought to be maintained for that purpose. I respected that, but I went back to the federalists, since that was my main commitment.

The power implicit in such an organization was a fact that wasn't lost on a number of people in the organization. Linus [C.] Pauling and Ben [Benjamin] Spock came in at somewhat separate times. Meanwhile, as you say, there was stormy weather. Any organization as powerful as this was certain to attract not only attention, but opposition, and especially in Congress. That led to accusations that SANE was communist-controlled or badly infiltrated. And since we'd made our impact through Congress, the people on the losing side in Congress were

not too enthusiastic about SANE and felt that such an organization could only be the work of Russian devils. Meanwhile, we're passing through a bad period. This was still a hangover from the [Joseph R.] McCarthy period, and the [James O.] Eastland committee [House Committee on Un-American Activities] and the [Thomas J.] Dodd committee [Senate Internal Security Committee], where peace organizations were suspect, supposedly the tools of Russian foreign policy. We came under attack in connection with a rally in Madison Square Garden. Among the luminaries at that Madison Square Garden rally, as I remember it, were Governor [Alfred M.] Landon, of Kansas, a Republican candidate in 1936; Mrs. [Eleanor] Roosevelt. I doubt that there's ever been a peace rally in Madison Square Garden that had more candlepower than this one. The treasurer for SANE was a man named Abrams. What was his first name?

BASIAGO: Henry [H.] Abrams?

COUSINS: That's right. The congressional investigations tended to focus on Henry Abrams, who apparently had had a record with various committees. I could see SANE going down the drain through this issue, as other organizations had. I went to see Senator Dodd, who at one time had been the head of the world federalists in Connecticut. He was my senator, and I was his constituent. I knew the people who worked for him, and Dodd knew enough about me to know

that my position was an independent one, and that I wasn't being pulled by strings by anybody, least of all the Soviet Union. But he was concerned, nonetheless. I didn't want people in the organization to be hurt. When I met with him, he said he had a list of x number of names of people, in addition to Henry Abrams, who were known--he said--members of the Communist Party. Being a member of the Communist Party was not a crime; it was a legal organization. But it was damaging in public opinion nonetheless. Also, to raise charges against these people would be damaging to them; it would hurt them in their jobs. I told Dodd we had nothing to hide, we had open books, and that I just hoped that he would not make a circus out of this thing. He said that that was not his intention, but he did want me to know that people who held office in the group, such as Abrams, were in fact members of the party. We had a long talk about this, and I sought from him assurances of protection for the individuals who would be called up--that they would not be publicly accused or even identified.

I spoke to Henry Abrams. I said, "I'm sure you understand that we're trying to protect this organization and also the members in it. But we're not going to be able to protect them unless we have information. If you are a member of the Communist Party, that's your right. But on

the other hand, we do have a right to deal with this issue. Dodd has assured me that if you're called up, he will not make a holiday out if it. But I suspect that you will be called, and I'm not going to ask you to do anything except to tell me whether the statement is untrue. If it is untrue, we'll fight it with everything I've got." He said he couldn't tell me that it was untrue.

Dodd kept his word; he didn't attempt to destroy the organization because of the fact that a few people did have records that were known to the government. But on the other hand, it did produce a crisis inside SANE itself. Pauling, who was a member of the executive committee of SANE, telephoned me to say that he thought that I'd handled this thing just right. He said that he had had a similar issue in California at the laboratory. He said, "I had to handle it the way you did. It's a messy business, but I want you to know I'm backing you in what you've done." That's what he told me. But later, he said some other things, and that was a great disappointment to me. We're still good friends, but I didn't understand why he would say one thing to me and another thing to other members of the committee. I stayed at SANE long enough to make sure that SANE would weather this crisis, as indeed it did.

BASIAGO: I found that when twenty-seven members of the Greater New York Committee for SANE testified before

Senator Dodd's committee, twenty-two invoked the Fifth Amendment when asked about the issue of communist affiliations. However, Dodd went on to defend the integrity of the distinguished Americans who constituted the national committee. What I'm wondering is, beyond the taint of communism or past communist affiliations that these members apparently had, did Dodd have any information that they were infiltrating the movement to use the issue of nuclear testing to foster any demands that wouldn't be in the interest of the United States? For instance, to foster an attitude toward unilateral disarmament or to damage the U.S. in its relations with the rest of the world?

COUSINS: You have to separate the issues involved here from Dodd's standpoint. He was a key player in the test ban treaty. He had objected to any treaty. In an attempt to bring him around, we had to meet what he considered to be--and what some others considered to be--reasonable questions having to do with verification. There was no problem with verification with atmospheric tests. There was at the time, in his mind, with underground tests, although many scientists felt that seismic techniques had been developed to the point where you couldn't get away with testing of any weapon of substantial size and anything under a certain threshold was no problem. But in any

event, if he was going to support a treaty banning limited testing, he didn't want to get involved in seeming to knuckle under in terms of the questions he himself had raised. So he did have that problem. His vote was essential to the treaty. So I was glad that we were able to avoid a head-on confrontation, which could have meant possibly his unequivocal opposition to any treaty. And he had two or three votes that he was going to bring along with him, and that would have tilted the balance. So it was a very delicate matter at the time, having to pick our way through this minefield in a way that would protect SANE, keep that alive, protect the members. Although a lot of people who didn't know what was happening assumed that we had joined in Dodd's witch-hunt. Milton [S.] Katz, from Iowa, has written about this.

BASIAGO: Yeah, Milton Katz has written about it. I was wondering about Dodd's--

COUSINS: My memory may be a little vague, but I think that his paper was pretty detailed on this, was it not?

BASIAGO: Yeah. You mentioned that you felt Dodd kept his promise not to turn the committees into a circus. I was just wondering whether he actually disapproved of the group's charter. You suggested that he did at first, but then that you were effective in swaying him?

COUSINS: Well, I don't know how effective I was, but he

did vote for the treaty. And when he received letters about the Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy, he made a distinction between the New York chapter and the national organization. We regarded that as an act of good faith.

BASIAGO: Some SANE members felt that Dodd had hurt the peace movement and had actually betrayed your agreement not to turn it into a circus. Do you think it was constructive or destructive to introduce the issue of loyalty tests into the disarmament movement?

COUSINS: I was against loyalty tests under any circumstances. But in terms of the basic question you raise, the fact that SANE survived and flourished is the definitive answer to the point you made.

BASIAGO: We had spoken last time about the two traditions, or the two houses of the American peace movement: the radical pacifist current, and what might be called the liberal internationalist current in the movement. I'm wondering if this event was pivotal in splitting those two branches farther apart. For instance, I noted that A. [Abraham] J. Muste, as a representative of the first group, believed that you had--as he put it--"committed a grave error in dealing with Senator Dodd," and the threat of exposing SANE to this sort of process. Muste felt that "standing up to Dodd would have meant that SANE was really against the war-makers, the cold warriors in the U.S., as

much as on the other side." Muste saw it as a clear-cut issue of civil liberties, and actually went on to accuse you of "modified McCarthyism." I'm wondering whether the two branches ever have gotten back together following that schism.

COUSINS: Some people are very comfortable living in a black-and-white world and prefer not to deal with the gradations--sometimes infinite in number--that involve political process and also political definitions. You always have the problem of getting from here to there, and I didn't want to just make a grandstand play, attract a lot of attention, and go down in flames but flailing out as I did so, calling names and other things. My whole exposure to the American experience was of an entirely different nature. I was not a Jacobin, and I had no intention of relearning the hard lesson that Tom [Thomas] Paine had to learn in France. It's so easy to make grandstand plays and to be a hero to a select group. If that's your main aim in life, you can achieve it. But if your main aim is to get something done, and you have to take into account everything involved in the processes of consent and pluralism in this society, and working with people you may disagree with, then you take a different course.

BASIAGO: I was wondering--in light of what you just mentioned--about the processes of consent, etc., in

government-- I find in President Kennedy's American University speech [June 10, 1963], which you were so instrumental in contributing to, the theme that JFK was decrying a "Pax Americana, enforced on the world by American weapons of war." I'm curious as to what extent you shared a vision that the United States could at once possess nuclear weapons, in fact develop them, even test them underground, stockpile them, and at the same time renounce a Pax Americana. In other words, I'm questioning the subtitle of the SANE organization, the Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy.

COUSINS: Intellectually, I saw no security capability in the possession of nuclear weapons, as I tried to point out in the first editorial I wrote on the subject, and as I kept hammering away in subsequent editorials. But I also had to ask myself, if I were in government, would I just get rid of the weapons altogether? Is this what I wanted Kennedy to do? Could he do it? And so I did have that ambivalence between my own conviction that nuclear weapons were a form of insanity, and added to a nation's insecurity, and the specific problems that [faced] a president of a country which already was in possession of such weapons. [He required] a policy that would be acceptable in terms of a consensus that he clearly was required to create and lead. I therefore was thinking in

terms of stages by which we might move toward sanity and what form American leadership would take in a world which was itself moving towards collecting and stockpiling such weapons. Not just the Soviet Union but, potentially at least, a dozen or so more nations. That was my own ambivalence. I continued as an individual to talk about the folly of such weapons. But in doing things for the president, I tried to recognize that he was working inside an entirely different context. In that context, it seemed to me that that leadership could define the military and the moral issue with respect to nuclear weapons and move in the world arena as effectively as possible towards a comprehensive ban.

BASIAGO: This is a sort of a historiographic point of order. I find in Arthur [M.] Schlesinger [Jr.'s] biography of the Kennedy years, A Thousand Days, Theodore [C.] Sorensen crediting you with providing JFK a letter that he then modified into the American University address. In your archives, I find more extensive correspondence between yourself and Theodore Sorensen and several drafts of the speech. What was the extent of your role in producing that particular speech, which I understand Khrushchev called the greatest speech by an American president since Roosevelt.

COUSINS: When I told President Kennedy, after my return the second time, that the time had come for a breathtaking

peace offer to the Soviet Union--that the situation in the Soviet Union was one which I thought would be responsive to it, though not for very long, because of Chinese pressure--The president caught on immediately, and telephoned me, in fact--and I think you'll find this in my notes somewhere--afterwards, saying that he'd been thinking about it. He'd also spoken to Ted Sorensen about it, and he hoped that I'd get some notes down and work with Ted on it. I got a call from Ted, and we met at some restaurant in Washington, in which I reviewed for him what I told the president. He also had the letter that I'd written to the president at that time, and I told him I'd be glad to send him a draft, which I did. You probably saw the draft. I felt that the spirit of that draft was beautifully reflected in the speech the president gave. And I thought that Sorensen's own way of dealing with it was very poetic. But I don't know where Schlesinger got his information. I found some other curious things in Schlesinger. He said at one point, "If Norman Cousins is to be believed, Khrushchev thus-and-so." Well, Kennedy had no difficulty in believing it. So I don't know what-- It was rather grudging, I thought.

BASIAGO: I found twenty major phrases and sentences that found their way verbatim into the speech, which I think was an immensely eloquent address and very powerful.

COUSINS: Kennedy himself credited me with the idea and the

impetus for the speech, and Sorensen himself had said the suggestion came from me, and that I'd sent some notes for it. But to me the significant thing was that the speech did exactly what I hoped it would.

BASIAGO: Had President Kennedy read your book **In Place of Folly**? I know that several ideas from **In Place of Folly** found their way into the speech, such as the idea that radioactivity would be carried on wind and water, poisoning the planet.

COUSINS: It may have come out of our discussions. I don't know whether he read the book or not. But the thing that always surprised me about Kennedy, as I told you, was that he encouraged a direct relationship. Even dealing with President [Dwight D.] Eisenhower, I had to go through Miss Woods, I guess her name was. Rose Mary Woods, is that her name?

BASIAGO: That was President [Richard M.] Nixon's--

COUSINS: Oh, Nixon, that's right.

BASIAGO: Was it Evelyn Lincoln?

COUSINS: No, Lincoln was Kennedy's.

BASIAGO: Oh, yeah, yeah.

COUSINS: Her name begins with a "w." Not Woods, but-- But in any event, I would call her, and she would talk to the president, and then I'd get a note from the president, or she'd put through the call, or I'd come down to

Washington. But with Kennedy, he would call on the phone and say, "Now, don't hesitate to call me directly," that sort of thing. Well, that's-- This is all petty, anyway.

BASIAGO: Studs Terkel reflects in his autobiography that when Bertrand Russell was trying to bring together world leaders following the Cuban Missile Crisis over the issue of nuclear proliferation, that President Kennedy was a little bit colder to the idea than he thought. Do you have any recollections of Russell's initiative during this time?

COUSINS: No, Russell was not very adroit. He made it difficult for his ideas to be processed properly, because he'd gone public with them first. When you're trying to work with the president, you don't put him in a position where it seems as though he did something only because Bertrand Russell suggested it or because the public forced him to do it. I always had the feeling that Russell's approach, which was to beat a drum in public and in effect dare the head of the state to do something, was not the way to get that done. If you wanted to work for a president, you had to contrive to make sure that he gets the credit for the idea.

BASIAGO: Predating your involvement with Kennedy was your conflict in 1959-60 with Governor [Nelson A.] Rockefeller of New York over both the issues of above-ground nuclear testing and the issue of fallout shelters. What are your

recollections of those battles?

COUSINS: Very vague. Until you just mentioned it, I would not have referred to it in connection with all the things leading up to the treaty. If you were to ask me about Nelson Rockefeller, I probably would have said that during the war we were under the same roof. I found him very congenial, very outgoing--gregarious, in fact. But now that you mention it, there were a lot of people of reputation who opposed a test ban. I remember some problem I had with Allen [W.] Dulles, John Foster Dulles's brother. I don't know whether Nelson, at that time, was as close to Henry [A.] Kissinger as he was later. But Kissinger was his guru at one time. And Kissinger was unpredictable about positions he might take, but never unpredictable in terms of the fact that those positions would reflect his own desires to be front and center and to stand in well with the establishment. Just as you find Kissinger now opposing INF [Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty] on points which have validity, but which are not as important as the need to have the treaty--or not sufficient to defeat the treaty. So at that time he was reading the small type to Nelson, I think. But apart from that a side issue, it would not have been easy for Eisenhower--we're talking about the fifties--to move inside his party. Once it became Kennedy's show, then, of course,

you had political advantages or factors to be taken into account, which complicated the picture. But by and large, Nelson was a constructive force in the country, and if you have a final reckoning, he would come out on the plus side.

BASIAGO: You had called Governor Rockefeller's fallout shelter program "dangerous nonsense."

COUSINS: That's right, that's right.

BASIAGO: I guess during this time the idea of nuclear war survivability planning was pretty much killed off. I know throughout the early sixties that schoolchildren were still rehearsing to protect themselves from a blast. What were your fears in this regard?

COUSINS: Well, you see, the entire fallout shelter phenomenon was not confined to how best to protect civilians during a war. It had at least as much to do, if not more so, with the way nations play games with each other and how they send signals to each other. It was a large group, and I have no doubt that Nelson belonged to it, which felt that the Soviet Union wanted to see how far it could go in Berlin and elsewhere. Only by demonstrating to the Soviet Union that the United States was prepared to face up to the reality of nuclear war could you establish your credibility in dealing with the Soviet Union and stop them from undertaking these probes. So it was a

geopolitical device, and not something that had any real substance to it, in terms of whether the American people could be protected or not. But the fact that we were getting ready to protect ourselves in the event of a nuclear war was the main thing that the proponents sought to achieve. So it was part of the dishonest chessboard--the game we were playing with the Soviet Union--and not anything that had any genuine validity of its own.

BASIAGO: In early 1962, you would break with Freedom House, the foundation dedicated to the One World principles of Wendell [L.] Willkie. The board of directors of Freedom House, over your dissent, said that the testing of nuclear weapons may prove the only means of forcing the Soviet Union to negotiate seriously for an effective treaty on nuclear control. Do you recall any of this dialogue with the directors of Freedom House?

COUSINS: Oh, I sure do. I sure do. In my files, you'll find a memorandum that I wrote, point by point, after I came back from the Soviet Union. And this memorandum corresponds, I think, rather closely with U.S. foreign policy as it has emerged since, in terms of changes inside the Soviet Union. The essence of the memorandum was that we're not dealing with a Stalinist Soviet Union, that it was infinitely more sophisticated, not without opportunities so far as the United States was concerned.

[It] called for reevaluation, in any case. The Freedom House people, Leo [M.] Cherne and Harry [D.] Gideonse, were locked into the notion that we were still dealing with a Stalinist Soviet Union. That things don't change at all, and that we were being taken in. That you couldn't have any treaty, no matter what it was. They had other formulations. Freedom House was born as an antitotalitarian movement, and I supported it on that basis. But some of the people in it--in an attempt to prove they weren't soft on communism, it seemed to me--tended to lose their balance on specific issues, and couldn't adapt to change. But if you read some of [Ronald W.] Reagan's speeches justifying INF, or speeches of President [Gerald R.] Ford and President [Richard M.] Nixon on the subject, you see that even the Republicans are far to the left of Freedom House on how we deal with the Soviet Union. They were not dealing with reality; they were dealing with outmoded concepts.

TAPE NUMBER: XIV, SIDE TWO

MAY 9, 1988

BASIAGO: Your book **The Improbable Triumverate: [John F. Kennedy, Pope John, Nikita Khrushchev]** pretty well clarifies your role with President Kennedy and Premier Khrushchev and Pope John XXIII. I'm wondering. Something that doesn't find its way into that work and other writings that you've done on that period was the impact of President Kennedy's death on your activities. By late November 1963, I imagine that you were rather close to the president; the American University speech was in June of '63. What was the personal impact of the president's assassination?

COUSINS: Well, the president told me he looked forward to working with me on many fronts. And, as I think I told you, he asked me about coming down to Washington. I was at that point involved with the Saturday Review [of Literature]; I couldn't extricate myself at least for six months. I was thinking seriously of having a close relationship, whatever that would mean. But apart from that, I really felt the bullet that struck down the president. That bullet also struck down many things that might have made a safer world. I was looking forward to what the president might do in his second term of office. He'd won a great deal of praise for the test ban treaty, which he regarded as his outstanding accomplishment. He was able to rise above the bickerings and

the kind of pettifogging nonsense that people close to presidents unload on the president in the name of strategy and presidential perquisites, presidential options. He was able to see beyond that. I didn't know how long it would take after his death to get back to the high platform he had built. It was a disaster for the world, not just for the United States.

Personally, I felt the loss, of course. It changed the course of my life, at least in terms of what I wanted to do with the rest of my life. Every time I went down to the White House after that and saw that rocking chair--[tape recorder off] One time when I went down to Washington, met with President [Lyndon B.] Johnson, and he sat in Kennedy's rocking chair, I had mixed feelings about it. Seeing him sit in that chair and talking, I could also visualize Kennedy sitting there, addressing himself to the same issues, and wondering what he would say. Instead of the tentativeness and indecisiveness that Johnson had about Vietnam, I could almost hear Kennedy talking in terms of, "Well, let's see what the underlying principle here has to be. Where will it lead? What happens if it doesn't work?" The things that he would ask the generals, you see. I know it would be a mistake to think that I was less scarred by that bullet than anyone else.

BASIAGO: You mentioned that it changed the course of your

life and redirected the future that you were anticipating along another path. How so? I find you still working for the cause of peace.

COUSINS: Only in the sense that I thought there was a strong possibility that I might go down to Washington and work on a more regular basis with the president.

BASIAGO: Had you discussed any particular position or role or office that he might--

COUSINS: He had not discussed it in any particular way, but he said he hoped I might work with him; it would be more of the same thing that I had done before. The political arena was one to which I was drawn, but never on an elective basis. When, in 1949 or '50, Senator Brien McMahon died, [Chester] Bowles asked me if I'd be interested in considering an interim appointment. It would have meant serving out one year of the unexpired term, but then running for office. My molecules didn't take too well to everything involved in an election. I had written out some speeches, as a matter of fact. What I would say in my first speech was, "I've a very high regard for my opponent. I don't seek the position because I think he's not qualified; I think he is. And I don't intend to wage a campaign based on things that are wrong with him. But this is what I believe, and if it has any appeal to the people, that's what I intend to do." (I had even written that

speech out.) But in the end, I-- Besides, I don't think that Bowles was doing anything more than going through a checklist. I think he had always intended to appoint his buddy, or rather, former partner, Senator [William] Benton, to whom I was also very close.

BASIAGO: We discussed the earlier conflict in SANE in 1960. In 1967, the group split again over the position it would take on the Vietnam War. Generally speaking, what was the position you were taking on the war, and how did that differ from the group represented by Dr. Spock?

COUSINS: I was not in the organization at that time, so I took no part in the debate. But as I remember that debate, it was not on a clear-cut issue of should we fight. Should we be in Vietnam, or shouldn't we be? But how do we extricate ourselves from Vietnam, and what were the stages of extrication? My feelings about Vietnam were reflected in the pieces I did on the subject. When I went to the Far East in U.S. Air Force One, with [Hubert H.] Humphrey as presidential ambassador, at the inauguration of [Ferdinand E.] Marcos, I sat with the official party in the president's part of the plane. The president's plane is divided into two sections. You have the president's office and his immediate entourage up front, where you've got a special layout. And in the back, it's as what it would be on any coach flight, three and three. That's where you had

the press corps. Jack [J.] Valenti would have to give the press corps briefings. One day after he came back into the president's section he said, "The fellows back there want to know what the hell you're doing up here. They say that you're absolutely opposed to the war in Vietnam and wonder if the president knows that or not." He said, "I told them that you take a very constructive attitude towards the entire problem. I'll let it go at that." [laughter] Of course, I was opposed to the war.

BASIAGO: It seems that inside of SANE you had those who were strictly pullout-minded versus those who were negotiation-minded. Would you count yourself among those in the negotiation-minded camp?

COUSINS: Yes.

BASIAGO: Why so? Why that position rather than a unilateral pullout? What was to be achieved by negotiations that an American withdrawal, such as we saw in '75, could not achieve?

COUSINS: Every great change involves negotiations in terms of what is going to happen. The big mistake that we made in getting out of the war with Japan was to assume that you had to have unconditional surrender. Well, there are always terms. I thought we had to talk to the North Vietnamese and establish a kind of relationship that would enable us to maintain our own world participation--or

participation in the events of the world--beyond the end of the war. Yes, I felt that negotiation was possible. Now, I believe in a phased withdrawal, which is the only way it could have ended anyway. I don't know, the other was unilateral pullout--and there was no possibility that the United States would do it. Politically, the president could not have done it. The president would not have walked away from it. So we had no choice, it seemed to me, but to have a negotiated peace.

BASIAGO: I'm unclear when your departure from SANE came. I was under the impression it occurred in 1967 when Spock took the group in a different more radical direction.

COUSINS: Much earlier. Just after the test ban treaty.

BASIAGO: What were your feelings on the direction the group took after that? At least, during the Vietnam period, and since then.

COUSINS: Well, I'm probably wrong about that, but I felt that it started as a committee of committees and had accomplished its purpose. One of my main ambitions in life was to be responsible for the dissolution of a committee, whatever it was. [laughter] We had accomplished our purpose, and we-- I wanted to go back to the federalists, which I did. Seymour Melman and some of the others--

BASIAGO: H. Stuart Hughes?

COUSINS: He was not a prime mover. It was a powerful

committee, there's no doubt about it, and people don't turn in their seals of office lightly. We've discovered that about government in itself. There was an honest difference of opinion between us. They may have been right.

TAPE NUMBER: XV, SIDE ONE

JUNE 7, 1988

BASIAGO: In July, 1963, you were invited to membership on the Citizens Committee for a Nuclear Test Ban, which was chaired by James J. Wadsworth, President [Dwight D.] Eisenhower's adviser on disarmament. Individuals such as Walter [P.] Reuther, Reverend James [A.] Pike, New Jersey Governor Robert [M.] Meyner, HEW [Department of Health, Education, and Welfare] Secretary Marion [B.] Fulsom, and the former undersecretary of state, William [L.] Clayton, were some of the 167-person committee of prominent Americans, which included thirteen Nobel-[Prize] laureates. What was the specific responsibility of the committee, and were you assigned any specific tasks on it?

COUSINS: I was not invited to join the committee. I was the founder of it. I was the one who invited Wadsworth, a former member of Congress, to be the chairman. He was a Republican, commanded great respect, was an excellent speaker, very forceful. It seemed to me that he'd be a good chairman, and the president [John F. Kennedy] agreed. This committee was designed to accomplish that which the Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy [SANE] could not accomplish. At least, not as readily. The Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy was a coordinating committee, bringing together many organizations, and working for a

nuclear test ban. But it seemed to many of us that now that we'd entered the phase where we had to get support for ratification, that a somewhat different strategy was called for--one that brought in some of the elements that were missing in the Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy and one, most certainly, that would make more of a dent on the Senate of the United States, in particular. Business representation on the Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy was rather sparse. But by getting the general who is the head of Eastman Kodak [Company] and a number of other business leaders we were able to show much more clout than the Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy, even though many members of the board of SANE also went on the Citizens Committee, including, as you mentioned, Walter Reuther. The president, in fact, reviewed with us the names of those who were going to be brought onto the Citizens Committee and made some suggestions. He was particularly eager, as I remember, to get the support of Cardinal [Richard] Cushing, and agreed to call Cushing himself, as well as to telephone certain business leaders himself. He said, "Use me. I want to work alongside you with this."

The Citizens Committee was very effective. We were, you see, in the home stretch of ratification. I had a woman--I think her name was Lillian Schultz--who was the

executive secretary of the Citizens Committee. She prepared a master looseleaf book describing all these operations. Have you seen that? You might ask Jean Anderson if she can get that master book. If it's not under Lillian Schultz's name, it might be under Mary Harvey's name. In my book dealing with the test ban, the--(I've seen about six patients today. I'm so weary, really. Especially women who are very sick, it can be dispiriting.) But in the appendix to The Improbable Triumvirate, I think we may in fact have that report or a large part of it that I'm referring to.

BASIAGO: I've seen that, yeah.

COUSINS: Is that under Mary Harvey's name, or--?

BASIAGO: I believe so.

COUSINS: Well, that describes the work of the Citizens Committee pretty well.

BASIAGO: In regard to this, what was your level of involvement with the bipartisan Senate committee, which included Senators [J. William] Fulbright, [Hubert H.] Humphrey, [John] Sparkman, [John O.] Pastore, [George D.] Aiken, and [Leverett] Saltonstall?

COUSINS: We were giving them the nutrients that they needed to justify their position, nutrients in terms of effective public support for their position.

BASIAGO: Do you recall any of the political strategy that

was being discussed among these senators, which would--

COUSINS: Well, I had a talk with [Senator Thomas J.] Dodd, as I remember. Now that the proposed treaty took into account his criticisms, he felt obligated, in fact, to be helpful. And Humphrey--an old friend, as you know--was there to do anything that was necessary in terms of bringing other senators together. He helped to discuss strategy with-- We're dealing now with the year 1963.

BASIAGO: In several years, Senator Fulbright would become an outspoken critic of United States Vietnam policy. Do you recall any particular involvement with Senator Fulbright in the sixties?

COUSINS: Certainly not on a par with Humphrey or Dodd or [Senator Edmund S.] Muskie. I think Muskie may have been there at that time, too. But I'd known Fulbright in other connections, mostly in connection with education programs here and abroad.

BASIAGO: I'd like to get your ideas in terms of assessing the Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy. A prominent chronologer of both your career and SANE's history is Milton [S.] Katz. He credits SANE with helping to create the [United States] Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. Yet in looking through the archives I have trouble finding any direct connections or interconnections. What were they?

COUSINS: It was not the Committee for a Sane Nuclear

Policy. If that was your point of entree into the filing system, I can understand it. It was the [United] World Federalists. At that time Paul Walter was the president of the federalists nationally. Walter had been the campaign manager for Senator Robert [A.] Taft of Ohio. This gave us a very good bipartisan approach to the issue. But Walter, also as a world federalist, was interested in the deeper issues and long, ongoing institutionalization of the attempt to control the arms race. We approached Humphrey. I had just sold the Saturday Review [of Literature] with a letter of intent, which meant that I couldn't sell my stock for a year or two. But I was able to borrow money from Lenore Marshall, the poet, and this enabled us to put fifty thousand dollars into the attempt to create the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. Everything was done out of Humphrey's basement office in the Senate building, in terms of generating support for it. The year would be somewhere around '61, '62, or '63. What year do you have for that?

BASIAGO: Well, I'm kind of unclear, because you mentioned that you just sold the Saturday Review. I believe that was in 1971.

COUSINS: No, '60.

BASIAGO: But of course, the agency was created much earlier.

COUSINS: I sold the Saturday in 1960.

BASIAGO: Hmm. I see. It was then again sold in 1971?

COUSINS: In 1960. I sold it to the McCall Corporation, to Norton Simon. I was with it ten years. When I left it, I was not the owner of it. But I reacquired ownership of it after the bankruptcy, and then sold it again, in 1976, to [Carll] Tucker. We felt it was necessary to take the entire structure of arms control out of the Pentagon [Department of Defense], and also out of the State Department, and give it a life of its own. It might otherwise fall victim to or tend to reflect positions of the State Department and the Pentagon, which were moving in the opposite direction, moving away from arms control into massive military spending. In short, we felt that the negotiations for arms control should have a separate agency where their loyalty would be to that objective and to nothing else. Humphrey felt this was extremely important, and world federalists, not SANE, were the ones who worked alongside him for this particular purpose. The federalists have always believed that the creation of that agency was due in large part to the alliance they had with Humphrey at the time.

BASIAGO: Milton Katz concludes that, "Although the nuclear test ban treaty seemed a major accomplishment for their organization, SANE was overly optimistic regarding its

impact." He concurs with Lewis Mumford, who was rather critical of course, that "this was a classic example of too little, too late." Katz blamed SANE for a "euphoric feeling over what was an insignificant victory." How do you assess the significance of the test ban victory to the overall arms control problem?

COUSINS: The same way that [John F.] Kennedy did. We tend to make a mistake in looking for concrete sequela and overlook the importance represented by a change in climate which can prevent ominous downside developments. The test ban, which Kennedy highly valued and felt was his principal achievement in office, was the first specific accomplishment in the direction, not just of arms control, but of a relationship with the Soviet Union that would permit further such efforts. In Kennedy's mind, this was the first step. He felt that the momentum created by it, as well as the logic of events, would make it possible for him to propose a comprehensive test ban within a fairly short time, certainly within his administration. The opponents of a test ban treaty were disturbed precisely because it was accomplishing what many of its backers hoped it would do, which is to create an environment conducive to further efforts in reducing the threat of nuclear war and also reducing the need for massive military spending. But once you have a stake, or are committed to massive military

spending, then anything that weakens the case for it tends to be bad. And that point of view, and those forces, still persist. A lot depends, it seems to me, on the yardstick that is used to measure events. With respect to the test ban, we can look at the long trail of events following 1963 and ask ourselves, "What, after all, was accomplished? We're building up weapons, we're conducting underground tests; the world crisis has not been eased. Why do we make it sound as if the test ban was such a triumph?" The answer is that the very fact that it was done enabled people to believe that we were not altogether at the mercy of an irreversible tide. The very fact that it could be done indicated to many people that more could be done. It's too easy to be a scoffer or a cynic and say, "Well, what good did it do? After all, look where we are." The fact of the matter is that it was one of those cubits of hope, the absence of which could have radiated out, it seems to me, in a number of very unfortunate directions.

BASIAGO: One follow-up question regarding SANE and the test ban. When we last spoke, you mentioned that you left the organization effectively well before the split that occurred in the organization in 1967 when Dr. Benjamin Spock became much more prominent in the group and Vietnam policy became the issue rather than disarmament per se. But I found a 1967 article in the New York Times, which

reports you leaving the organization with thirteen others. That is, leaving the board over Dr. Spock's positions--what you described in the article.

COUSINS: I got out long before 1967. The reason that I left was not that I disagreed with anyone on the board, but that I felt that SANE had come into existence for a specific reason. It was an organization of organizations. As a coordinating agency, it had a very well focused objective, and that was to bring about an end to nuclear testing. Having accomplished that purpose, I decided to go back to the federalists. That was my particular accent, just as other groups that were part of SANE had their own accents. If I didn't agree with Spock--I'm not sure that that would have been enough cause to leave the organization, although he represented certain positions and approaches that didn't conform to my own prejudices.

BASIAGO: This took the form of an official resignation from the national board in October 1967. Could it be possible that you had, in terms of your own contributions, already left the activities of the board?

COUSINS: Yes.

BASIAGO: I guess something of overriding relevance to the discussion becomes the conditions surrounding President Kennedy's assassination. During the summer and fall of

1963, President Kennedy began laying the groundwork for further agreements with the Soviet Union on nuclear nonproliferation, step-by-step disarmament, enlarged cultural exchange, security arrangements for Southeast Asia and Berlin, and a more robust United Nations. Indeed, his speech at American University on June 10 of 1963--which you, of course, helped write--was probably the most impassioned plea by an American president for nuclear disarmament. By the end of the year, he was assassinated. I was wondering, as one close to the president during this time, did you ever learn facts or entertain any beliefs that he was murdered, perhaps by forces within the United States government who might have been opposed to his vision of a peace for all time?

COUSINS: It was very difficult to escape altogether from such apprehensions or forebodings. If you recreate the atmosphere that existed at the time, the events did very little to quiet public speculations. Even before you try to speculate on the inner history, you have the factual history of the assassination, with a great many contradictions. You had an official story, and then you had specific evidence that the official story either omitted or overlooked or ignored. The number of bullets. You had the [Abraham] Zapruder film. You had witnesses talking about shots fired from a knoll, back of which they

were standing. Then you had testimony about the direction of the bullets, which seemed to come from the knoll. And the denials were so prompt, of course, and so emphatic, that you wondered why these things were not fully investigated. There seemed to be at the start an attempt to limit it to [Lee Harvey] Oswald. The entire episode with Jack Ruby--why he was able to get so close to the assassin. The story of Officer [J. D.] Tippit. The death of Ruby himself in prison before trial. All these things did little to reassure the American public that the full story had been told. Meanwhile, there was no shortage of material in books or articles fueling such speculation. Years after the Warren Commission Report [**Report of the President's Commission on the Assassination of President John F. Kennedy**], the questions continued, and it became necessary to reopen it again. Obviously, any such event is bound to produce suspicion and speculation. But when, in addition, you have genuine questions raised, which have never been satisfactorily answered, the worst-case scenario is bound to gain attention.

BASIAGO: In your mind, what were some of the unanswered questions or the questions that were too quickly dismissed from the official version, and what would that worst-case scenario be?

COUSINS: The bullets; the gun; the direction from which

shots were fired, not just from the Texas [Book Depository] direction, but from the knoll; the entire Jack Ruby episode, his proximity, how he got so close to Oswald, why he died in prison. All these things inevitably raised questions in the public mind. I still don't think that they've all been satisfactorily answered.

BASIAGO: As one who had been very close to the president at this time and working with him over the issue of nuclear disarmament, do you recall the disagreement he had had with the Department of Defense over nuclear missile procurement levels?

COUSINS: No.

BASIAGO: I ask this, because after our last recording session ended, it seemed that you'd left me with the impression that he may have been killed by a clandestine agency of the United States government. I was wondering whether that was a speculation that you thought was possible, or whether you had any--

COUSINS: I've heard such speculations. The revelation about the existence of a secret unit, under Nixon. The revelation in this book that I've told you about [Secret **Warriors: Inside the Covert Military Operations of the Reagan Era**, by Steven Emerson], about the formation of a group in the Pentagon with power which used government funds without any reporting as to how they were used. The

interaction of such events with mysteries concerning the assassination, not just of Jack Kennedy, but of Bobby [Robert F.] Kennedy. All these things have been profoundly disquieting. The assassination of Allard [K.] Lowenstein, who was looking into the assassination of Bobby Kennedy, who came to see us at the **Saturday Review** to present his initial findings on this, which in turn served as a basis for an article that he wrote for the Saturday Review. I don't know whether you saw it or not. All these events are much too numerous, it seems to me, to be retired or dismissed.

BASIAGO: You mentioned that even after JFK's passing you remained involved to some degree with White House affairs. You mentioned that in 1965 you were invited by the president to join Vice President Humphrey at [Ferdinand E.] Marcos's inauguration. When the Warren Commission report was issued in 1964--and much of the evidence was sealed for seventy-five years--did you ever get any credible explanations of the need for such a measure, from those in the [Lyndon B.] Johnson administration, that you're still in touch with?

COUSINS: No.

BASIAGO: Was it ever discussed?

COUSINS: No. I had a discussion with Ted [Edward M.] Kennedy in, of all places, I think it was Tbilisi, the

Soviet Union, during one of the Dartmouth [College] conferences. Among the wild speculations about the circumstances of the president's death was the fact that Madame Nhu, the sister of the president of Vietnam [Ngo Dinh Diem], who had been assassinated, had been to Dallas just a few weeks before the assassination, where according to the report, she'd met with Mr. [Haroldson L.] Hunt and several others, and--

BASIAGO: That was E. Howard Hunt? One of the Watergate conspirators? Or the Hunt family, the billionaires from Texas?

COUSINS: I'm trying to think of his full name.

BASIAGO: There were several brothers. There was a Nelson Bunker Hunt--

COUSINS: This is the father.

BASIAGO: The father? Patriarch.

COUSINS: Now this came not long after the assassination of President Diem. The CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] had been accused of complicity in that assassination, as you know. Among the questions that had occurred to some people was whether the death of Jack Kennedy was the revenge. The fact that Madame Nhu had been in Dallas and the question, "why would she go to Dallas?" fueled that speculation. Teddy Kennedy said he had had no information on that--that that particular possibility had not been raised with him.

The Kennedys were very uncomfortable being subjected to such speculations. They didn't quite know how to handle it, naturally and understandably.

BASIAGO: When we last spoke, you recalled how painful it was to view President Kennedy's deserted rocking chair, or see it occupied by another, such as President Johnson. Without seeming insensitive, I'd like to explore whether the collagen disease you then encountered in 1964 might have been related to the stress of the assassination. I'd like to put it in perspective so I can better understand **Anatomy of an Illness as Perceived by the Patient: Reflections on Healing and Regeneration.** Is it possible that it played a role?

COUSINS: Well, this was the theory of Dr. [William M.] Hitzig. He noticed that for some time after the assassination I seemed in a daze, and I was not thinking sequentially. He would talk to me, he said, and then wondered whether the sounds ever got through. And he noticed that I was losing weight. There were millions of Americans, I think, who felt that bullet. I don't think any bullet in history, including the one that was fired in Ford's Theater [where President Abraham Lincoln was assassinated], I don't think any bullet in history traveled as far, or in so many directions, as that bullet. Also, it was hard for me to adjust again; I'd just about made the

adjustment to the decision to accept the president's invitation to work with him on matters concerned with an imaginative approach to peace. It had permeated my subconscious, these were the things I was dreaming about, writing speeches in my sleep, trips that would be taken, living them before they happened many times. Then suddenly there was this grotesque discontinuity, as though I'd walked off a cliff. Which was as nothing, of course, compared to the tragedy itself, its implications. That tragedy had to do with the future of the United States, and in a very real sense, it seems to me, of the human future.

The assassination inevitably limited Johnson's options. It tended to fix the walls around him. Any president who comes into office under those circumstances is confronted, first of all, with the need for reassuring the country, avoiding issues which could tear open some wounds. While those policies or attitudes were necessary in the aftermath of the assassination, they didn't necessarily move along the path that Kennedy had set for the country, a path that I'd been contemplating very intensively.

When I went to the Soviet Union the next summer, I had a very deep sense of lost opportunities because of Kennedy's death. Not that Johnson didn't want to pursue

those openings. He did. In fact, at the Leningrad meeting with the Russians, I had been asked by Bill [D.] Moyers--I talked to the president and also Bill Moyers--that when I met with [Nikita S.] Khrushchev to explain that the United States had limited objectives in Vietnam and that we sought a nonmilitary settlement to the war. Since the meeting was in Leningrad, and I was presiding--I don't know whether we went over this--I asked David Rockefeller to carry out my assigned task: go to Moscow, talk to Khrushchev, and try to emphasize to him that we had limited objectives in Vietnam, and that those objectives were to get North Vietnam to give up the notion that it could force its position through military means or achieve its position through military means. That we were not out to conquer; we were not out to destroy. Rockefeller absented himself from at least two of the Leningrad sessions of the Dartmouth Conference, went to Moscow, and came back rather sheepishly. He said while he was meeting with Khrushchev, Khrushchev was handed a note. He [David Rockefeller] said, "Khrushchev looked up and said, 'You say the president doesn't want to widen the war? They just handed me a dispatch saying the United States has bombed the Gulf of Tonkin, bombed ships. What kind of assurance is this you're trying to give me?'" So Rockefeller was rather nonplussed by the turn of events, although he asked

Khrushchev to recognize that many things happen during the course of a war. The important thing was to know that the settled objective of the president, whatever might happen on a day-to-day basis, was to bring about a nonmilitary settlement. Then Rockefeller told me, he said, "I'm not sure I was able to convince the old man. Certainly the background of the Gulf of Tonkin episode was not very propitious for the undertaking."

Johnson represented a very interesting amalgam. He had always been identified as a military supporter. He was the one in Congress who was able to get through military appropriations. But now, when he had to orchestrate and balance off one force against another, he tended to tilt towards the military. It was natural for the military to think that it could achieve a military solution. But the president of the United States had to take other possibilities into account, too. But the juggling in his case was made, perhaps, more difficult than it would be for most, in the light of the assassination, in the light of his own connections with the military, as their spokesman on the hill, and in light of the conflict that was being stepped up.

Meanwhile, the president was being besieged by a lot of macho advice. The nations in Southeast Asia, and the governments in Southeast Asia, were saying that, "You don't

really mean it" and that they can't count on the United States to help them. We've got to demonstrate to them in an unequivocal way that we're not going to let them down, that we will stand up for the noncommunist world in that area where the noncommunist world is threatened. They're pressing us, "What are we going to do, Mr. President?" They feel that it's not necessary for us to actually go to war, but just to show the flag, bring American uniforms into their thing, and make a strong nonmilitary commitment. But to do it in a very positive, dramatic way, "We're not going to back down." So it was, as I say, this macho argument. That carried the day. But what was required to persuade X, Y, and Z that we were very resolute, escalated, almost on a daily basis, until such time that they say, "Well, you are willing to sacrifice, to use other men, to do this, but the rest of the world is not going to believe that the United States really means it, unless you put your blood into the battle." And then it happened.

We put an awful lot of blood into the battle and didn't prove anything except that we didn't really understand that the central issue in Vietnam was not communism or the spread of communism. Because there was a long history of antagonism between Vietnam and China, centuries old, as there was antagonism between the other

nations of Indochina. But we persisted in being influenced by a domino theory, which is that the collapse of North Vietnam would lead to the collapse of Thailand, and the collapse of Thailand would lead to the collapse of Cambodia, and that would lead to the collapse of Laos, and the collapse of Indochina would lead to the collapse of Indonesia, and Singapore, and then Burma, and then India and Pakistan and so on, westward. That was based on the notion that there's such a thing as a central, monolithic communist plan. What we didn't realize, even though history tried to tell us differently, was that the dominant forces in the world were not ideological but national. You could have conflicts between communist nations based on historical national considerations. So now we see that Vietnam and Cambodia have been shooting at each other, that there's been border warfare between Vietnam and China, and one wonders whether all those arguments that were used to justify the loss of American lives, and American involvement on that scale--

TAPE NUMBER: XV, SIDE TWO

JUNE 7, 1988

COUSINS: In the end, we realized that there's no substitute for knowledge. There are prejudices and assumptions. John Foster Dulles had certain notions about the monolithic nature of communism. He didn't take into account the conflicting national histories of the Soviet Union and China, any more than he did the differences between Vietnam and China, or Vietnam and Cambodia. He had that very rigid conviction, and that was to come down the straight line and lead to what happened in our involvement in Vietnam. Well, now we realize that there are communists in North Vietnam, and communists in Cambodia, and the two of them can be fighting, and the United States has not been attacked by communism, militarily, and that the Far East is still a cauldron as it was then. So the basic assumptions which led us into the war have turned out to be incorrect, but I don't think that we've yet come to terms with the seriousness of that particular era, or that it can be repeated, as indeed it has in other forms. [tape recorder off]

BASIAGO: Were there any other contributing factors to your illness in 1964?

COUSINS: Well, when I was in the Soviet Union, as I say, the implications of Kennedy's death were still raw and very visible. I was trying to deal with the Russians in terms of

the various issues between the two countries, and I had these daily reminders of lost ground. Meanwhile, we were staying at a hotel, the Sovietskaya Hotel, some miles from the center of the city. It was the VIP hotel, and there was a housing project under round-the-clock construction near the Sovietskaya. We were on the second floor. All night long these trucks with their elevated smokestacks were pouring [carbon] monoxide and hydrocarbons into the air, and I woke up each morning feeling terribly nauseated with those fumes. I became ill while I was in Moscow but insisted on going home. I had a fever at the time, and while I was on the tarmac at the airport, one of the Soviet jets turned around, and we caught the full force of its jet spew. That probably played into or exacerbated the original problem. By the time we arrived in Copenhagen, I had a very high fever on that plane. I almost had to be carried off, as a matter of fact. When I was examined, they said that there seemed to be apparent symptoms of heavy metal poisoning. It's quite possible that the spew at the hotel each night and at the airport may have had something to do with it. I think I probably could have handled that pollution--certainly my wife [Ellen Kopf Cousins] did--if it hadn't been for the fact that I had been under some stress for some months, especially in Moscow, when all these reminders of the great loss to the world were very real to me, and very fresh again.

TAPE NUMBER: XVI, SIDE ONE

JUNE 28, 1988

BASIAGO: Today I'd like to discuss the Dartmouth [College] conferences. In 1958, President [Dwight D.] Eisenhower wondered aloud to you whether people-to-people contacts could have a direct impact on negotiations at the government level. A question that occurred to me as I was reading through your Dartmouth Conference archives is once the conferences unfolded, how independent were they from official U.S. government channels? What was the relationship between the conferences and first-level negotiations with the Soviets?

COUSINS: The State Department was involved in the funding of the initial conferences, with the Ford Foundation. We were not asked by our government to advance any particular position but, obviously, we felt an obligation to report fully to our sponsors. After those early meetings, the State Department would arrange briefings, at which they would invite different parties--the foreign desks of the White House, the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency], the assessments branch of the military, various [people] from the State Department. I remember Chip [Charles E.] Bohlen at one or two of those early briefings. There may have been maybe twenty people around the table, as I remember it. But we didn't receive at any time any request from the

State Department to advance a point of view or seek information on certain subjects. What generally happened was that we would avail ourselves of the offer of the State Department to bring us up to date on its own discussions, as well as its own information on events pertaining to or inside the Soviet Union.

Those briefings have continued to this day. Sometimes they have involved White House personnel. For example, I remember [Robert C.] MacFarlane, when he was National Security [Council] adviser, participating in the briefings. These briefings, in fact, have become perhaps even more structured in recent years than they were in the early years. David [O.] Mathews, president of the Charles F. Kettering Foundation, is very systematic, and prepares the agenda very carefully, and then seeks information in advance from government agencies, concerning their own views regarding those particular issues, as well as to obtain information. Thus, we've had the Soviet desk in the White House, the Soviet desk of the State Department, as well as military briefings. The participation--at least in advance--of government agencies, is perhaps stronger now than it was many years before the Kettering Foundation was involved. But all this is on the informational, rather than instructional level. I think it's important to make the distinction between the two. They're spreading the

table for us in terms of what they happen to have. It's up to us to take what we think is of value to us. I'm very grateful for these sessions, because a great many times there is information of genuine value that we can use. But we've never been used by the State Department as a conduit or as an informational channel.

BASIAGO: You mentioned that the conferences have been used as a "diplomatic back-channel." How would you define that?

COUSINS: Providing information on our return which may be useful to them. What possible openings there may be. If we perceive possible answers or compromises, then we want to be sure to pass that along so they can be pursued. I have no way of knowing what use the government makes of our debriefings, but we're very happy to provide an account of what went on.

BASIAGO: I was wondering, as I was looking through the rosters--both the Soviet and American rosters--reading all the distinguished individuals who have been associated at some time with the conference series, how the American participants were selected, and how the Soviet participants were selected.

COUSINS: On the American side, it's been an evolutionary process. At the very start, since Dartmouth was involved, John [S.] Dickey and Stone--you'll find his first name--

BASIAGO: Shepard Stone?

COUSINS: Shep Stone, yes, of the Ford Foundation. I surveyed the list of possible participants, which we drew up ourselves. Then, with the passing of the years, with David Rockefeller occupying an increasingly important part--he was cochairman for some of the conferences--we would meet at his office and go over the list. We would generally start, you see, with the list of the previous participants, and add at least a third to a half of new members, year by year. Also, the nature of the list was shaped by the subject to be considered. Generally, we had people who were just out of government and therefore who were well informed about what was happening on the official level to mix with the group. We had business leaders and scientific experts--especially in the field of arms control--some of whom had been involved in the official discussions. It was and always has been a rather interesting mixture. The unofficial nature of the conference was, of course, the main characteristic of the group. But at the same time it was close enough to government in terms of experience to have a fairly good idea of what was happening on those levels, so that we wouldn't be totally irrelevant in what we were talking about. On the Soviet side what generally happened was that they would wait to receive our list of names, and they would try to pair them off at the very

start. For example, they would have someone who had an editorial post plus some cultural background as my own opposite member. One year, it may be the second or third, we brought over Marian Anderson as a member of the delegation. They had an operatic star, too. So they try to be symmetrical to the fullest possible extent.

BASIAGO: You've written that the most important thing about Dartmouth was, "Lines of effective communication were opened up. Human relationships were established." Who among the Soviet delegation became a friend or an important correspondent with you? How did this happen, and what's been the impact of any personal alliances that have formed?

COUSINS: At the very start, Aleksandr [E.] Korneichuk, playwright and editor, was the cochairman of the Soviet delegation, and I suppose that he was selected as my opposite member. He also was close to [Nikita S.] Khrushchev; he was from Kiev in the Ukraine. I would receive messages from Korneichuk periodically. He would have friends who were coming to the United States, wanted me to know about it, and was hopeful that I might be able to help them with their visit. And this I was glad to do. The same thing was true of Boris [N.] Polevoi, the novelist. Then they'd always be very thoughtful at Christmastime or on my birthday. There would always be messages and sometimes some fruit or flowers that were

sent. Then on those occasions when they would visit the United States themselves between meetings they would come out to the house; we'd have good visits. As I did when I was over there on purposes other than the Dartmouth Conference. We had some very searching conversations. At these conversations I didn't find as much evidence of the party line as I would in other meetings, including the Dartmouth conferences themselves. That was why I think I wrote that the most effective exchanges were away from the conference table.

BASIAGO: I wanted to explore that point. During the first Dartmouth Conference in 1960, you commented to the Soviets that "censorship in the Soviet Union had a psychological effect on American reporters, which was affecting their coverage of Soviet life." From the very start, did you find any evidence of self-censorship by the Soviet participants?

COUSINS: It was apparent to me that at the regular meetings--the plenaries--there was some degree of orchestration on the Soviet side. It almost appeared that certain people were assigned to cover certain points. I suppose too that there may have been one or two at the table on the Soviet side who were there for the purpose of making sure that the thing wouldn't get out of hand. That, for a long time, was a standard operating procedure. To me

the great surprise was not that there was an orchestrated presentation but that, under the circumstances, we didn't have more of the party line.

BASIAGO: Another issue I found that was introduced at the very first conference in 1960 was the issue of American wheat sales to the Soviet Union. I noted in the rapporteur's report that the American side had discussed President [John F.] Kennedy's decision to permit the sale of American wheat to Russia. What role have the conferences played in U.S. grain sales to the Soviets?

COUSINS: Perhaps indirect. We would bring key Soviet participants to Washington and have meetings with government officials, and this probably had as much effect on them as it had on us. But it did represent an additional vantage point from which they could view America and attempt to register their opinions, as well as for us to receive it and advance our own.

BASIAGO: I found many instances, in your addresses to the Soviets--some comments which later found their way into a number of your essays on the conference series--that you often found yourself sort of educating the Soviets about your views regarding the significance of the atomic bomb. In the very first conference, you said, "No truth in the modern world is more difficult to comprehend and act upon than that nuclear warfare is a supreme form of collective

suicide." I'm wondering when, during such comments, you discovered that the Soviets had comprehended that the advent of nuclear weapons had represented a qualitative change in the nature of warfare.

COUSINS: Well, I hope I didn't indicate, because it would have been presumptuous for me to have done so, that I was educating anyone. And I doubt that I would use the word, that I "educated" the--

BASIAGO: No, I think that was my commentary or characterization.

COUSINS: What generally happened was that I would become increasingly restive in the chair as the discussion seemed to spiral down into minutiae. "This is what we said, this is what you said." It began to sound more and more like a diplomatic meeting. I would carefully bide my time and then erupt with some such statement as you had there, calling their attention to the fact that we were not there to imitate the diplomats but to address ourselves to what was really the overarching problem. I didn't think we could justify our existence, either at that table or back in our own countries, if we didn't use all our energies and powers of persuasion to do something about the number one problem, both at that table and among the citizens of our countries. That was the one note on my bugle that I would keep playing in conference after conference. Inevitably,

there would always come a time when that would be in order to remind us of what our central purpose was. It was interesting to me to see the effect on the Russians of this, because they were extremely responsive to it. If you go through the minutes, you can see they would refer back to it, to the number one issue. But it's very easy to retreat into familiarities--to take comfort in being able to get involved in small issues or intermediate issues. I probably made a pest of myself by coming back to that big question. But also, I would try to do so in the context of the need for both countries to understand what was meant by creating new world institutions. I suppose the Americans were as annoyed or bored with me as were the Russians.

BASIAGO: Reflecting upon many of the things you've incorporated in your work, as a writer and as a political person, did you ever discover that there was a parallel individual in the structured Soviet society? Someone who became very prominent in discussing the advent of the atomic age and the related need for world order?

COUSINS: I kept hoping that the Russians would invite [Andrei D.] Sakharov for precisely that reason. I thought that there was a junction where science, philosophy, and ideology met, and I thought that he would be very comfortable at that junction. Sometimes, [Georgi A.] Arbatov would ascend to that plateau, as he did this last

meeting, at the LBJ [Lyndon B. Johnson] ranch. But they seem to be more comfortable on the specifics that they've been schooled in, generally speaking.

BASIAGO: In August of 1961, the USSR announced that threats to its national security were forcing it to break the informal joint testing moratorium. You immediately sent a strongly-worded cable to your friend, Aleksandr Korneichuk, trying to dissuade the Soviet government from a dangerous course, which you felt was filled with hazard for all mankind. I'm wondering, specifically, what impact the communication had, and about other instances when such overtures transcended the actual structure of the conferences.

COUSINS: Well, there were many times when I was upset. I'm talking not about the meetings, but at other times when there'd be very clear abuses with respect to Sakharov or anyone else. There was one point at which I got so upset that I wanted to quit my participation as cochairman in this. That could have happened half a dozen times. As a matter of fact, once or twice I erupted at the meetings themselves and said that I wondered whether all the effort that we had put into Dartmouth Conference was justified, whether we were all being pulled along by a great undertow. I'm trying to think of some of the specific events. Some of them had to with writers. There was one

time I was upset over the treatment of [Aleksandr] Solzhenitsyn. I may have fired off one or two telegrams or cables or more on that, I don't know.

BASIAGO: These would be to their representatives to the conference? A question that I really can't pass up is, I found that a remarkable observer of the human condition, Margaret Mead, joined you at the second Dartmouth Conference in 1961 in the Crimea. How did she view the Russians? Did you have any discussions with her, just anthropologically what her views were, regarding the Soviets and their society?

COUSINS: She had a bone in her throat about me. She had interpreted my Waldorf-Astoria speech almost as a war drum, as a slogan that would lead people in the wrong direction. But she hadn't looked at the context in which I was saying that. At the Waldorf peace conference [Cultural and Scientific Conference for World Peace (1949)] I tried to explain the dominant position of the American people, as best I understood it. I said, "Americans don't believe in peace at any price." Well, if she had read the next few sentences, she would have understood what I was talking about. While most Americans would go the extra mile for peace, they're not going to surrender their freedoms. But neither will they be oblivious to opportunities to reduce the tensions that could result in a threat to freedom. She had

seen the headline in the newspapers. After I gave the talk at the Waldorf, there was a lead story on the front page of the [New York] Times and [New York] Herald Tribune in New York, and there was a cartoon in the [Chicago] Tribune, I believe, where Uncle Sam had a balloon that says, "We don't believe in peace at any price," that sort of thing. So she was taking this at the level of sloganeering, rather than at the level of substance. She never could get that bone out of her throat. She perhaps identified me with people who were obsessed with hate for the Soviet Union.

Fortunately, the Russians understood what I was talking about. They never made the mistake of identifying me with unthinking or unfeeling feelings about their country. They knew that I was opposed to communism in the United States. They understood the reasons for it, as I had explicitly said in my talk, and I think they respected it. As a matter of fact, the Russians gave me the impression that they would much rather deal with Americans who believed in their own country--their own system--and were strong in their belief in those values, and articulate, than with people falling all over themselves to advance the Soviet point of view.

BASIAGO: In writing about the Crimean conference, you tell an anecdote about the American group encountering a group of Russians who were taking a rest cure as a result of

nervous disorders caused by months of enormous labors, inadequate diets, crowded living quarters, and lack of creature comforts. I imagine, over the long course of this series, you've developed an understanding of the Russian people and their way of life. What are some of the most important things you've learned about their character and culture?

COUSINS: I have to hesitate before assigning characteristics to a collective entity, whether the Russians, or the Americans, or anyone. But just speaking about the people that I met, I seemed to perceive a very great hunger, a craving for contact with the outside world. Almost a desperate need to crack through these crowded walls and low ceilings, and break out, quite literally. They were hungry, especially hungry for contacts with Americans. They are a very human people. I don't think that they particularly relished being told to be very guarded in their contacts with Americans. I don't think they particularly relished limitations with respect to people they could invite into their homes. And all this, I think, figured in this fierce desire to break out. They have a great admiration, I thought, for the United States and for its people. This was almost part of a love-hate relationship: Hate in the sense that we were officially, at times, tagged as enemies, especially under

[Joseph] Stalin. They never quite believed, I think, what their government told them about this, and when they had the opportunity to reach out, they would not only do that, but embrace Americans. It's almost a heartbreaking experience to meet with people who have great intellectual capacity, depth of feeling, innate values that we would respect, who were captives in their own country. So the relations with them became rather wistful. I had the feeling that they were looking at me like a little child pressing his nose against a windowpane, looking at things they could never have.

There was something in the atmosphere that affected even visitors. This transcended conscious awareness, so much so that when I would get on a plane and the pilot would announce that we'd just crossed the Russian border and we were now in Poland or Czechoslovakia--whatever--even though we were still in Central Europe, just the fact that we were beyond that border produced an astonishing release of the spirit. It's nothing that you could explain, because I didn't go through a process of saying, "Good, I'm out beyond the Russian border, we don't have to worry about being bugged. We don't have to worry about all these other things." But there is, as I say, this spontaneous and almost instinctual response of the spirit to release. I've spoken to other people who have had somewhat the same

feelings. If we have them, you can imagine what so many Russians must feel.

That is why I was so thrilled at the recent meeting of the Dartmouth Conference when I could see their eyes and hear in their voice the tremendous surge of hopeful energy or energetic hopefulness that came from their expectations of what is happening, might happen, under [Mikhail S.] Gorbachev. The combination of glasnost and perestroika. It was, it seemed to me, as I listened to it in Austin, [Texas], nothing short of a major revolution. When I would use that term in talking to the Russians, they didn't back away from it at all. But their hope, of course, is that it will be a bloodless revolution.

BASIAGO: As I was reading through the American and Soviet statements for the second conference, I found statements--Perhaps this one is representative. This is from the American side. "Both the United States and the USSR are revolutionary societies concerned with human good." I'm curious about the informational strategy that's sort of reflected in the American statements. Was the American side just being diplomatic, or was there a certain intention to the sort of statements they would make, to try to reach certain understandings?

COUSINS: It varied with the individuals. For example, Grenville Clark was extremely sensitive to the impact of

Russian history, especially during World War II, on the Russian people in general, and the participants in our meetings in particular. He, and others like him, were always aware of what the psychological bridges might be to the Russian consciousness. That when they would speak about societies with similar historical aspirations, they might be making a distinction in their own minds about the aspiration and the fulfillment. But so long as the aspiration was there, it was possible to construct a bridge over which some intellectual traffic could cross.

BASIAGO: During the first several conferences--or after them, actually--the Americans felt it important to make the point that the U.S. economy does not really need an arms race in order to prosper. I'm wondering about the strategy of that point. If the two nations were engaged in a competition psychologically, might it be a disincentive for disarmament for the Soviets to realize that we weren't bound by a war economy?

COUSINS: There was a view, not just among Soviet intellectuals but in the United States, that the American people were dependent on military spending for prosperity or even well-being. We didn't get out of the Depression until World War II came along, which either fostered or strengthened this notion. And there was the assumption that the Soviets might feel that we were holding back,

because of our dependence on military spending for a viable economy. So not just at that meeting, but at meetings over the years, this thing would come up again. We would generally be pretty well armed with information to refute it. There had been a number of studies in the U.S. Seymour Melman and other people, some of them associated with him in various parts of the United States, had made studies showing actually how the economy of the United States might be bolstered if we could free it from these constraints.

BASIAGO: After the second Dartmouth Conference, the Soviets thought it important to declare, "We must forever exorcise war, both small and large wars. Governments should never resort to force or threats. We must employ collective reasoning," etc. I'm wondering to what degree you could gauge that this was just rhetoric on their part, considering some of the abuses of their society, and their policy of wars of liberation around the world? Or, to what degree they were truly moving out of the shadow of Stalinism, when the conference began in the early 1960s?

COUSINS: Probably a mixture. What the exact proportion might be of each, I can't say. Away from the conference table, the balance would shift it seems to me in the direction of a greater opening up or restructuring. At the conference table, I don't think they ever strayed very far

in their early days from the official position. Although they might have very clever ways of articulating those positions, so that we could hear between the lines.

BASIAGO: Another comment the Soviets issued after the second conference was, "The Cold War is dangerous, in that it is likely to become hot, and it builds increasing hatreds and tensions, which become more difficult to transcend." Reflecting upon JFK [John F. Kennedy]'s dilemma--he discussed this issue of the hardliners in both nations ratcheting up the arms race--I'm wondering whether the Soviets were aware of this mutually destructive tension and what they were doing about it to cope with it within their own structure? To what degree did the participants at the conferences reflect either a more hawkish or a dovish Soviet position? The American side seemed sensitive to this phenomenon. Were the Soviets?

COUSINS: To a surprising extent that conference was something of an arena of mirror images where the same issues were reviewed in the same way, whatever might be said. That was natural. After all, the Cold War was having a devastating effect on both countries, and we might allow doctrinal differences to distort that reality. But if you were to look at a transcript of what was said on these issues, without respect to who was saying it, looking back on it today you would find it very difficult to know whether it was being advanced by an American or by a Russian.

TAPE NUMBER: XVI, SIDE TWO

JUNE 28, 1988

COUSINS: There were, to be sure, almost conditioned reflexes in the way people would respond at the Dartmouth Conference. Especially if it was felt that a point was being scored against the United States, rather than for a common position, or a point was being scored by us against the Soviet Union. Where it becomes necessary to defend home and country, that sort of thing, you had a certain amount of that, perhaps inevitably.

BASIAGO: One thing I found fascinating about the Soviet response to American intellectual life is an apparent tendency to overstress the importance of certain key intellectual leaders or commentators upon the arms race. They mentioned after the second conference their fear of such individuals as [Karl] Jaspers, or [Sidney] Hook, or [Thomas C.] Schelling, or [Herman] Kahn, or [Henry A.] Kissinger. And later they were disturbed by Barry [M.] Goldwater's presidential bid in 1964. I see in the mid-seventies they had a problem with Zbigniew Brzezinski's views. Why was this so? They seem like such intelligent people. Were they misinformed, or were they getting limited information?

COUSINS: In that monolithic society, where no one says anything except as it may represent settled government

opinion, it was very difficult to recognize that what appeared in the press in the United States did not to some degree reflect the official view--or didn't have some significance officially--either as a trial balloon or as an indication of what was intended. It became very difficult for us to get them to understand the complexity of the American political system, to get them to understand how the press actually worked, to get them to understand that when Goldwater was quoted as saying something, that this was not a reflection of something that was happening in the White House. Their educations were very slow in this respect. But I think that they finally have now developed some sophistication about the United States. I think that the USA and Canadian institute [Institute for United States and Canadian Studies], Arbatov's group, which has been working very steadily now for some years in understanding the United States and applying a weighting system to what appeared in the press-- I think that, as I say, in recent years they've become a little more sophisticated. But for a long time it was very difficult to help them avoid the confusion that came from following events in the United States, statements by prominent Americans or articles in the press.

That difficulty, as a matter of fact, was one that Kennedy had to face in his discussions with Khrushchev.

Khrushchev would say, "Well, they give me these quotations, this is what your press says." And the president would have to explain that that didn't represent his view, or the official view of the government. Since Khrushchev operated under a different system, it was difficult for him to shift gears, as he had to.

BASIAGO: The overarching issue of the conferences, of course, was preventing nuclear war. I guess you could say there were doctrines on both sides, various doctrines of arms control. They seemed to hit on this issue quite frequently, trying to describe American arms-control advocates as not really believing in general and complete disarmament. What were some of the mutual apprehensions about the arms control doctrines of each side of representatives?

COUSINS: The fascinating thing about the positions of both countries is that they periodically climbed into each other's underwear. You go back over the years, there'd be one year where the Americans would be advancing a partial position and the Soviet Union a more universal one. Then you'd have terms like general and complete disarmament advanced by one and rejected by the other. And you can track this. It would be interesting to see what a psychograph would show of all these positions. You'd realize at times that the position at any one time was

actually a maneuvering tactic. That if the United States was bent on resisting cutbacks or ceilings, but didn't want, for public opinion purposes--not just here but in the world--to make that explicit, we would raise the antes so that the Russians would be responsible for refusal. Vice-versa, they would do the same thing. It was very difficult, many times, to know exactly what the real objective was.

It's difficult now, even with all the meetings that have taken place, and the various pronouncements, even with the INF [Intermediate Range Nuclear Force Treaty]. While there's some clarity--certainly more clarity than there was some years ago, concerning the basic intentions, what was it we really wanted, what was it the Russians really wanted--I don't think that all the murkiness has been dissipated. It's hard to tell whether items that are being put on the table are there because they're obsolete and were not of much consequence anyway, or whether other things are taking their place. So we've had, for some years now, bargaining based on actual or anticipated obsolescence and point-scoring. It's been very hard to identify areas involving genuine substance in bringing these weapons under control. But certainly, the INF Treaty took a bite. It was not just shadowboxing, to mix a metaphor. The ICBMs [intercontinental ballistic missiles]

would be even more so, if that is concluded. So I don't think we must allow the accumulation of past suspicions to obscure present possibilities.

BASIAGO: I noted that very early both nations were very concerned about the expanding atomic club and, as the Russians described it, the problem of the Nth country engaging in expanding nuclear proliferation. What concrete strategies were developed by the Dartmouth Conference for superpower cooperation, regarding the growing number of nuclear nations?

COUSINS: We were wringing our hands in two languages. Neither country was willing to face up to the reality that you can't expect other countries to forego what you have just because you want them to, or because it would be disadvantageous to you to have them proceed. Not until we were willing to give up would it be realistic to expect others to forego. So the conferees would generally be confined, as I say, to handwringing. "Oh, the hell and the shame of it." And, "Isn't this a threat to both of us?" "Oh, yes it is." And then, "How do you persuade them not to do it?" It became a matter of persuasion rather than a plan of action in which we would be part of the equation ourselves.

BASIAGO: Various ideas have taken shape over the past several decades regarding the problem of nuclear

proliferation. Such things as a joint U.S.-Soviet crisis center. Was the Dartmouth Conference responsible for any innovations in thought regarding the problem of nuclear proliferation?

COUSINS: I don't think so. I don't think that they came to terms with the basic facts, namely that you can't control weapons at the point of numbers. Weapons are the result of underlying situations. These underlying situations are related to the exercise of unfettered national sovereignty, mutual insecurity, tensions genuine or artificial. That you really had to address yourself to the need for effective world order if you're going to get adequate control over weapons. You had to control the circumstances which would result in their use. That was where I would put on my federalist cap. I didn't see how they could make any fundamental progress unless they had a fundamental change in the concept of what security required. After I had advanced this point of view--I tried to do it as logically as possible, and historically--everyone would listen very respectfully. Then after two or three minutes, they'd jump back into the familiar we-or-they arguments.

TAPE NUMBER: XVII, SIDE ONE

JULY 6, 1988

BASIAGO: To continue our discussion on the Dartmouth Conference, fifteen minutes into the third Dartmouth Conference, President [John F.] Kennedy [JFK] went on television to discuss the ramifications of the discovery of Soviet nuclear weapons on Cuba. As the thirteen-day Cuban Missile Crisis ensued, Andover [Massachusetts] became, as you described it, "One of the few places in the world where Americans and Russians were talking, walking, and eating together." I was wondering--

COUSINS: And also trying to find a resolution together.

BASIAGO: I wanted to gauge the extent of that and the degree to which that particular meeting moved up to the level of first-level negotiation. According to Gail Warner and Michael Schuman, in their work **Citizen Diplomats: Pathfinders in Soviet-American Relations and How You Can Join Them**, much of what was said at the conferences was rapidly relayed to government officials on both sides. Did the participants become actual intermediaries for the superpowers at that point?

COUSINS: Not officially. Nor were we requested to get specific answers to specific questions. But some specific things did come up. For example, Father Felix [P.] Morlion, the president of Pro Deo University in Rome, whom

I had known in other connections, came to Andover with a message from the Vatican. Pope John XXIII, recognizing the gravity of the Cuban Missile Crisis, and recognizing, too, that its effects would be felt far beyond the nations directly involved, wanted to appeal to the leaders of both countries to draw back out of a common respect for the right of other people to live. By drawing back, he proposed specifically that the Soviet Union withdraw the shipping and the United States withdraw the blockade. Shemienko and [George K.] Zhukov, I think, relayed that message to the Kremlin and received word that the Soviet Union would welcome such a statement. The pope didn't want to make any proposal that would be turned down, you see. I telephoned the White House, and then got a call back from [Theodore C.] Sorensen, saying that the president asked me to thank the pope and to say that he recognized, as did the pope, the implications of what was happening, and realized, too, that the entire world was involved and not just the two contending nations. But the president insisted that the issue was not really the shipping or the blockade. The issue was the existence of Soviet missiles on Cuban soil. That this is what posed the threat, as the president saw it. He asked the pope to realize that if the missiles didn't come down by Saturday at six o'clock, the United States would have to knock them down. But JFK encouraged

the pope, nonetheless, to proceed with his public declaration, with respect to the responsibility of all parties. This the pope did, although he omitted the request with respect to shipping and blockade, just called attention to the gravity of the crisis, and called on both countries to recognize a higher mandate than national concerns alone. That was one specific example where the conference was something of a switchboard. But the governments did not use that conference to advance positions or to get reactions to them.

BASIAGO: You've outlined your involvement, as you've described it in **The Improbable Triumvirate: John F. Kennedy, Pope John, Nikita Khrushchev.** I'm wondering about this reference that Warner and Schuman make, that many of the participants in that particular meeting were feverishly working to exchange information with their governments. Was anyone else busy, besides yourself, serving as a switchboard?

COUSINS: That description, "feverishly working," conjures up images of the conferees darting in and out and rushing to telephones, almost like reporters at the World Series. The conferees stayed at their posts. I wasn't aware of anything of a feverish nature. But we did have people who were very close to government. You have the list of those who were at that conference, so you can see that there were

people there with a sense of responsibility, who were using the information at their disposal for possible benefit to their governments. I have no doubt of that. But I was not aware of any hyperactive situation that would justify the use of the term "feverishly."

BASIAGO: In addressing the conference during the crisis, Grenville Clark called for a "strong world police force, world tribunals, a world development authority, and a world revenue system." I notice this was a key moment, where the basic structure of world federalism was advocated--perhaps the premier instance, in terms of a pressing historical event occurring at the same time. How did the Soviets respond now that the need for such institutions was set in such telling relief by the crisis?

COUSINS: As I think I told you earlier, Grenville Clark made a profound impression on the Russians. He did so because he was smart enough to realize that he would talk to them in terms of their own experience with war and would not superimpose views that were developed in another context. When he began to speak--and it's still very vivid in my mind--he spoke of the [siege] of Leningrad, he spoke of the suffering of the Soviet people, he spoke of the proximity of the German advance to Moscow, and he demonstrated that he had a real sense of what that experience meant to the Russian people. Once having done

that, there wasn't anything that he could not have had. That was what made Grenville Clark a great man, because he had no difficulty in putting himself in your position. You knew that he was representing you. Yes, his talk did make a strong impression on them. They were not, of course, in a position to move forward with his suggestions, any more than he was in a position to dictate to the American government. But this is how public opinion works.

BASIAGO: I notice that, just generally speaking, the conference began composed primarily of cultural leaders, and then there was a gradual shift toward political, economic, and even military representatives. How and why did this occur? And just generally over time, how have those forces ebbed and flowed? For instance, I notice in the mid-seventies, there were several generals and several U.S. officials involved in defense policy who found their way into this conference room.

COUSINS: This was a natural evolution. We began with citizens of both countries getting to know each other. But as we went along, and specific issues were involved in the confrontation between the two countries-- And realizing that we could not avoid addressing ourselves to these issues, but neither would it be responsible for us to do so without the fullest knowledge of what was involved-- That led, perhaps inevitably, to people in both delegations who

had been or were very close to government and who dealt with these very problems while they were in government. But when the context changed from official discussion to unofficial discussion, and there could be more frankness, because there was no penalty to either side, you discovered that their experience in handling these issues officially was really an asset in the discussions, just as being able to go much further in these informal discussions was an asset to the governments. As people who were in the governments would come back, and we would have briefing sessions--or debriefing sessions--the Dartmouth Conference became institutionalized. I think that figured increasingly in the general preparations of both countries for their meetings with one another or in policies.

We felt that in discussing military matters it was important to bring to the conference responsible military leaders who were no flamethrowers, who were very knowledgeable, restrained, who were genuinely searching for alternatives. General [David C.] Jones, for example, made a profound impression on the Russians, because of his moderateness, his realization of the folly of nuclear war. Well, that was part of our evolution, and it was inevitable that people who made a profound impression on these conferees on both sides would be called back, and that we'd get others like them. The military never really

dominated the conferences, any more than ex-under secretaries of state, or national security advisers like [Zbigniew] Brzezinski, or men like [Helmut] Sonnenfeldt, [Henry A.] Kissinger's right-hand man. But they represented a good resource, and their effect was, on the whole, very constructive.

BASIAGO: You mentioned, when last we spoke, that David Rockefeller played an increasingly important role in the conference series. What was he seeking to achieve through his participation in the conferences?

COUSINS: The same that I was seeking to achieve and everyone else was seeking to achieve--improved access, a chance to eliminate misunderstandings, a chance to learn, to contribute perhaps a smidgen to the chances for peace.

BASIAGO: I noted, when reviewing the conference dates, that the conferences weren't held in the years 1965, '66, '67, and '68. Why not? Why didn't it occur during these critical years of the Vietnam crisis? How did the continuity break down after 1964?

COUSINS: The Soviet position towards Dartmouth meetings tended to reflect the temperature of the Cold War. On our side it was the same. During the Jimmy [James E.] Carter administration, for example, a specific objection was raised to holding one of the Dartmouth conferences, because official policy was not to be talking to the Russians. I

felt, and David Rockefeller agreed, that the government misread the purpose and the usefulness of these meetings, which was to serve as a bridge even when the governments were not talking or when there was a breakdown. And that it was important to maintain a lifeline, not despite these breaks on the official level, but because of them. So we went ahead, despite the opposition of the Carter administration. I think that that demonstrated to the Russians, as did nothing else, that we were in fact an independent body, even though we did have access to government, and even though we had people who were very close to it--as I say, former officials in the State Department or the military, or in other branches of government. Governments can be little children at times. All the immaturity that one sees in squabbles among kids are present, omnipresent, one should say, in the dealings among nations.

BASIAGO: So you were working throughout the [Lyndon B.] Johnson years to keep the conferences on track?

COUSINS: Yes.

BASIAGO: Did you have any particular adversaries within the administration who were trying to squash the conferences?

COUSINS: No.

BASIAGO: It seems that it took a while to get them back on

track.

COUSINS: Bill [D.] Moyers was very close to the president, and he understood those issues. McGeorge Bundy was supportive, and he played an active role in these meetings. We had no trouble. Brzezinski, as a matter of fact, took part in one at the time, just before the Carter administration, when the probability of his appointment as national security adviser had been pretty well bruited about and the Russians were aware of it. This was a very interesting and useful experience for Brzezinski, as he himself said.

BASIAGO: I notice that he observed several times during his participation with the conferences that the primary concern of the superpowers should be to institutionalize their activities at greater and greater levels. Yet he remained one of the chief people the Soviets seemed afraid of. Why was that? He seemed to rank with Barry Goldwater and Herman Kahn and some of the others.

COUSINS: He was assiduously courted in Moscow when he went there with the Dartmouth Conference and on the trip. He himself was very much impressed with the attention that was paid to him. He would talk about it, and I think that his participation was not without educational value for him. He was able actually to meet with Russians and reason things with them. It was very useful in that sense. It

was useful for me, too. Because he told me that he had had the mistaken impression that I was one of the softies. Then when he heard me holding to a certain position very frankly and very openly, he recognized that the fact that I believed in having access to the Russians didn't mean that we had to tell them everything they wanted to hear.

BASIAGO: The Dartmouth conferences during the [Richard M.] Nixon-[Leonid I.] Brezhnev years took place at Rye, New York, in 1969; at Kiev in 1971; back at Hanover [New Hampshire] in 1972; and in Soviet Georgia in 1974. Generally speaking, what were the compelling issues during these conferences? And I'm wondering, given that during four years of the Vietnam crisis there were no meetings, what impact did these meetings have on the latter stages of the Vietnam War and the Vietnam peace process?

COUSINS: Did you say that there were no meetings for four years?

BASIAGO: I couldn't find any--

COUSINS: I can't remember when there was a four-year hiatus.

BASIAGO: I couldn't find any files or rosters for the late sixties, for the whole Johnson--

COUSINS: Did you check with the [Charles F.] Kettering Foundation about this?

BASIAGO: No, I didn't.

COUSINS: Why don't you check with Kettering, because they put out a brochure on the Dartmouth conferences, that you ought to see.

BASIAGO: Well, there have been some missing years--

COUSINS: Yes, but not four years successively.

BASIAGO: Hmm.

COUSINS: Yes, there were missing years. And then we developed the concept of special interests, of subject groups, and they met during the intervals.

BASIAGO: I just saw the fifth Dartmouth Conference represented as being in 1969, in Rye, New York. Perhaps there's a missing block in your files.

COUSINS: What was the previous one?

BASIAGO: In 1964 in Leningrad.

COUSINS: From 1964 to '69? No.

BASIAGO: Were they meeting in terms of work groups, but there was no--

COUSINS: No, there would be a plenary between.

BASIAGO: A plenary? Well, I realize that by 1988 you were on Dartmouth [Conference] fifteen or so?

COUSINS: No, this one that was just held was Dartmouth sixteen, wasn't it?

BASIAGO: Oh, yeah, Dartmouth sixteen. So that would be--

COUSINS: Well, let's count it off.

BASIAGO: That would be twelve missing years in twenty-

eight.

COUSINS: What was that?

BASIAGO: Wouldn't that be twelve missing years in twenty-eight?

COUSINS: That would be twelve missing years over thirty, almost thirty; we were alternating. But I don't think we had five successive years without a meeting, that's all I'm saying.

BASIAGO: Well, I know throughout Nixon's--

COUSINS: Here, let's start. Nineteen sixty at Dartmouth. Nineteen sixty-one and '62 in Yalta. Nineteen sixty-three--

BASIAGO: At Phillip's Academy in Andover.

COUSINS: Andover, that's right. That was the Cuban Missile Crisis. Nineteen sixty-four, in Leningrad. That's four.

BASIAGO: I have that jumping to a Rye, New York, meeting in 1969.

COUSINS: All right, that's five. Go on.

BASIAGO: And then you were back two years later in Kiev in '71.

COUSINS: Six.

BASIAGO: And then in '72 you were back at Hanover where you had started.

COUSINS: Seven.

BASIAGO: Soviet Georgia in 1974.

COUSINS: Eight.

BASIAGO: Moscow in '75.

COUSINS: Nine.

BASIAGO: Rio Rico, Arizona, in '76.

COUSINS: Ten.

BASIAGO: Then you had that memorable meeting in Jermala, Latvia, in 1977.

COUSINS: Eleven.

BASIAGO: Williamsburg, Virginia, in '79.

COUSINS: Twelve.

BASIAGO: Moscow in 1981.

COUSINS: Thirteen.

BASIAGO: Then you were back at Hanover in 1984.

COUSINS: Fourteen.

BASIAGO: Then you had a meeting-- I'm not really certain where that last one was. Was that back in Moscow, number fifteen? The one before the Texas conference.

COUSINS: We may be missing one somewhere, but I-- My memory may be faulty, but it's hard for me to realize that there's a five-year gap.

BASIAGO: It seemed that the correspondence was continued, but I couldn't find any instance of official meetings during the heart of the Johnson years and the early years of the Vietnam peace process negotiations.

COUSINS: Well, let's look at possible reasons for that, if it were true. The State Department was out as a source of support; they stopped it. The Ford Foundation was no longer active. We did get, I think, some money from the Rockefeller Foundation--not until Kettering moved in. And Kettering's first meeting, I think, was at Rye, wasn't that?

BASIAGO: Did you ever get any reasons why some of the institutional support was removed?

COUSINS: No. But Kettering was not the sole supporter in '69, as I remember it. But the way in which the Kettering Foundation has developed, the conference has been really inspiring to me, especially under David [O.] Mathews. Because he's gone at this thing very systematically, very knowledgeably, and he's been interested in pay dirt. He wanted to see radiating effects of this. He's brought the public into it and persuaded the Russians to do the same. This last one was the high point, of course, both in terms of the caliber of participants and also in terms of supplementary activities--bringing in the public, which they did in Austin and also in Los Angeles. Then, too, Mathews has developed the concept of the task force, from that of a holding company for the plenaries, to groups which had genuine substance in their own right. Their own agendas. We have some cumulative progress.

BASIAGO: I noted that [R.] Buckminster Fuller joined you during Dartmouth [Conference] four and Dartmouth [Conference] five in the 1960s. Did you meet Buckminster Fuller through the conferences?

COUSINS: No, I had known Bucky for a long time.

BASIAGO: What are your recollections of his contributions to the dialogue?

COUSINS: One episode, perhaps, may be representative of his participation. Was he at Rio Rico or the one before that?

BASIAGO: I believe he was at the 1964 conference in Leningrad.

COUSINS: Yes.

BASIAGO: Or, no-- Was he there during the missile crisis?

COUSINS: No.

BASIAGO: He was there in 1964, along with Franklin [D.] Murphy and--

COUSINS: Yes, Norton Simon.

BASIAGO: --J. K. [John Kenneth] Galbraith and David Rockefeller. This is where the Soviets expressed their fears about Herman Kahn's book, On Thermonuclear War.

COUSINS: There was one night when we would usually be regaled in entertainment at Leningrad. [Aleksandr E.] Korneichuk and I--I think it was Korneichuk--said "Let's have--"

TAPE NUMBER: XVIII, SIDE ONE

JULY 13, 1988

BASIAGO: When we were last talking, you were beginning an anecdote about [R.] Buckminster Fuller, one night at either the Leningrad Dartmouth [College] Conference in 1964, or at Rye, New York, in 1969. You remembered some--

COUSINS: Yes. Usually, we would have entertainment during the evenings. At Dartmouth, for example, the Dartmouth men's choir came on. In the Soviet Union they would have troupes borrowed from folk dancing, concerts and the like. We had one night that was free. [Aleksandr E.] Korneichuk suggested that we take our futurists--each country, each delegation would have its best futurist--and look at the year 2000. Ground rules: fifteen minutes precisely--or as they say, precis-e-ly, they put an extra syllable in it--and then general discussion. The Soviet futurist spoke first, [Evgeny K.] Fedorov, out of the Academy [of Sciences]. It was a very measured, fact-laden recital, dry but solid. In precisely fifteen minutes, according to the rules, he sat down. Bucky was our futurist. But I had to go over the ground with him very carefully, because, usually, Bucky is still standing in the doorway after fifteen minutes, and hasn't even taken off his coat, and that's about a half an hour. But he understood the ground rules. Bucky was magnificent. When

the end of fifteen minutes approached, I began to take out my watch, but Fedorov restrained me. He said, "This is superb. I've never heard anything like it. Please don't interrupt him." And then, after about twenty-five minutes, Bucky was still going. "No, no, don't interrupt him." Finally, Bucky finished, and Fedorov turned to me. He said, "It is no contest. Mr. Full-yer wins, as you say, 'hands down.' Absolutely superb. Tell me, what did he say?" [laughter] Bucky communicates without meaning. He gets you to fall in love with the universe, but if you're asked to do a precise summary, it may not be as easy as generating the enthusiasm for what he said. But the Russians loved him--as American audiences do--just because he gives you a feeling that you've made no mistake in being born a member of the human species.

BASIAGO: I'd just like to clarify, for the historical record, when you met him. I know that you had a great deal of involvement, particularly after the Dartmouth conferences in the sixties. Did you go all the way back to New York City, when he was still rather unknown, writing for **Shelter** magazine and--

COUSINS: Bucky was a very good friend of Chris [Christopher] Morley, on the [Saturday] Review [of **Literature**]. Shortly after I came to the magazine, he came up. Chris still had his office in the magazine. As a

matter of fact, I have Chris Morley's desk at home. Chris introduced me, and thereafter we had lunch several times. We just got involved in similar enterprises and became very close. I'd go up to Maine with the family to visit his island, which is really something of a shrine. I think he called it Bear Island, but I'm not sure. One year, we decided to vacation on a boat, had a little crew, and sailed from Portsmouth [New Hampshire] in Penobscot Bay to Bucky's island, which took a few hours. As our sailing ship came into view, Bucky waved to us from his private pier, and we got in the ship's rowboats. When I came on the dock, Bucky came running up to me, splay-footed, from the other end of the dock. His eyes were shimmering like watermelon pits in agitated olive oil. He said, "The most wonderful thing has happened." I said, "What happened?" He said, "You wouldn't believe it." I said, "I'll believe it. Tell me, what happened?" He said, "I just discovered the coordinates to the universe!" [laughter] I don't know very many people who discover the coordinates to the universe.

BASIAGO: Quite a phenomenon.

COUSINS: We were on many such jaunts. He asked me to help him with an organization that would support his work. Neva Rockefeller, who met Bucky at Leningrad, was very eager to help him. So was Glenn Olds. But what it required, of

course, was money, an awful lot of it. I went to visit Bucky once in the hospital, and he was then writing **Critical Path.** Here he was, I don't know whether he had fever or not, but his nurse wanted him to be quiet. He said, "Let me read something to you." I said, "Bucky, I don't want you straining yourself," little realizing that anything he read of his own work would not be a strain. He read it, finished it, put it down, and then said, to my great surprise, "Let me read it again to you." [laughter] He could not be faulted for inadequate appreciation of his own work! One time, after he lectured at Yale [University], he received very substantial applause, and then, after a while, silence. He said, "You know, this is the first time in four years when I have not received a standing ovation for my talk." At which point, of course, the audience rose. He said, "No, it's too late."

On another occasion, I received a telephone call at home from a woman on Sunday. It was about noon. She said, "I've done something terrible, and only you can save me." I said, "What happened?" She said, "Some time ago, we asked Bucky Fuller if he'd talk for our New Canaan [Connecticut] community. He said, 'That's Norman's hometown.' We said, 'Yes.' He said, 'I'll come on the condition that Norman introduce me.' Somehow it fell

between the cracks and no one called you. I just assumed that Arthur would invite you, and he just assumed that I would--or call you about it--to introduce Bucky. And now we discover that no one phoned you, and he'll be coming here at two o'clock." I said, "I would love to do it, but we've got company coming at four." She said, "Well, that's wonderful. In that case, then you'll be able to introduce Bucky, listen to his lecture, and get back in time for your company." I said, "I don't think that it works out that way with Bucky's talks."

Well, we finally agreed that I would introduce him, and then go down into the audience immediately, so I could slip out in order to get back to the house by four. Which I did. At a quarter to four, I slipped out. At five-thirty, I got a call from the lady, saying that there's a slight problem. I said, "What is it?" She said, "Mr. Fuller is still speaking." I said, "Is the audience still there?" She said, "Yes." I said, "Then there's no problem." "But there is, because the auditorium is committed to another group at six o'clock." I said, "Well, why not have Mr. Fuller make the announcement that if anyone wants to continue with him, they all go into the art rooms next door, and you can just pull back the retractable doors and have enough space for a couple hundred people." "Good idea." So she passed Bucky a note, thinking that he

would end it right there. But no, he said he'd continue the talk in the art rooms next door. They had pushed back the door. At six forty-five, this woman was on the phone again. "Mr. Fuller is still talking," she said. [laughter] I said, "What about the audience?" She said, "Oh, they're all there." I said, "Then there's no problem." She said, "No, but there is. They're going to close the school down at seven thirty." I said, "In that case, why not, at a quarter to seven, pass him a note and inform him of that fact." At about a little before eight o'clock, a procession of cars drove into our driveway. Bucky was in the lead car. He came into the house. "It was wonderful," he said. "I was able to round out my talk so beautifully at the end. But I think they wanted more." [laughter]

BASIAGO: He developed this scenario of man becoming a universal economic success, and I guess in that context he interpreted the arms race. I really have two questions regarding that idea. One is, in all the years that you knew him, did you get the idea that this was more a fanciful or mythological understanding that he was developing? Or did you have faith in the cogency and reality and proof that he could muster in behalf of his vision? And the second question is sort of a follow-up. What did his vision of a world-unified society, where you

could have "four billion billionaires," etc., contribute to your understanding of the arms race and other world issues?

COUSINS: As I say, when you listened to Bucky, whether in the audience, or one-on-one, his enthusiasm far outran the content, at least to me, perhaps to others. But every once in a while he would come down with something very tangible, such as a geodesic dome. And it worked. Or his tetrahedron structure, and it worked. I had to conclude that the fault was mine, rather than Bucky's. He wrote a piece for the **Saturday Review**, summing up his ideas. He did it in free verse. He wanted it to be set typographically as a poem in italics. Well, this didn't go down too well with the other editors on the staff, especially with the poetry editor. He said, "This is not poetry. Therefore it should not be disguised or housed as poetry." But I did, I ran it in the form that Bucky wanted. He put everything he had into it. The readers were very enthusiastic about it--it got some very good letters--but most of the readers said, "I just wish I knew what he was talking about!"

BASIAGO: Was there any cross-fertilization of his views in your work? It seems as if you were coming from a different tradition, sort of the heritage we spoke of, in the thirties and forties, and looking into the arms manufacturers, and--

COUSINS: Well, you see, I was trained to believe that words have specific functions, the most important of which is meaning, and that you connect words to each other in the clearest possible way. That murkiness, whether unintentional or calculated, is poor writing at best and at worst incompetence. But after a while, I realized that I had to make an exception for Bucky in this respect, as in all respects. So after a while I began to take Bucky on faith. He sent three copies of his Critical Path, when he discovered that I hadn't seen the first one. Then he called Ellen [Kopf Cousins] and she couldn't put her hands on the second one. He delivered a third one to the house, impressing on her the fact not only that this was the best book he ever wrote, but quite likely the best book that anyone ever wrote. Even that recommendation was insufficient for me to comprehend everything that he was saying. But behind the verbiage, the words you say, were some settled facts or opinions, one of which was that the earth could not only support its present population, but a population several times larger, if necessary. That we didn't have a plan, we didn't have a game. He had a "World Game," you see.

He felt that the resource of the human mind, the first resource--and I had no argument with him about that--could meet all existing problems. He used his brain to show how

this could be done. I had no doubt that he was right, which is that it was possible. But unfortunately, the mechanisms for doing it had to be filtered through contrasting political systems. I felt that sufficiency was a product of a total approach that included governance--especially with respect to conflict among nations. I felt that the resources that were necessary for his "World Game" were certainly attainable, and that the conversion of them into plenty was doable, but he tended to bypass all the intermediate mechanisms, especially the political ones.

BASIAGO: He, in fact, described it as myopia to even consider the political dimension of these problems.

COUSINS: Yes. I didn't attach monopoly value to the political process, but so long as the world was organized into these sovereign units, and so long as so large a part of the earth's resources were being drawn off into the consequences of those separate units, especially with respect to war machines, I didn't see how you could ever develop a plan for plenty. But that was the difference between us. It was not a difference that caused us any difficulty in our relationships. I just made a point of not disagreeing with Bucky. I saw no point in it. I could absorb what there was of value to be absorbed let it go at that--was grateful for it.

BASIAGO: Bringing it back to the Dartmouth Conference. On

the agenda for the conferences from the very start was the issue of the role of the U.S. and the USSR in the economic development of the emerging nations. In writing about the conferences, you frequently discussed the Soviet bias--that the U.S. would, they felt, fail in its quest for world leadership, because it lacked the economic philosophy to appeal to Third World citizens trapped in economic feudalism. Did the dialogue at the conferences result in any significant victories in terms of redirecting the efforts of the superpowers in the area of Third World development?

COUSINS: The most important thing that developed out of the Dartmouth conferences (and I don't know whether they could be called victories or not) was the very strong realization that the differences that were described and reflected at these meetings were really not a barrier to world survival, human survival. That there was a wavelength on which both countries could broadcast and be heard.

BASIAGO: You mentioned how the Andover conference in 1962 served as a "diplomatic back channel" during the Cuban Missile Crisis. Have any other conferences flowed with information as a diplomatic back channel at the same level of intensity or importance?

COUSINS: Not with the same intensity. After Cuba, we had

Angola. We had the breakdown in the Near East, the Six Day War, and so forth. I can't think of a time, in fact, when there wasn't something going of major concern to both countries. The meetings may not have been at a fever heat, but they certainly demonstrated the need for the Soviet Union and the United States to be talking seriously.

BASIAGO: I'm wondering if the 1969 and '71 conferences directly contributed to President [Richard M.] Nixon's May, 1972 visit to Moscow, which the Soviets seemed to hold in high esteem for quite a long while as an important milestone.

COUSINS: I don't know whether we had any part in that. But there's no doubt in my mind that he made a profound impression on the Russian people. So much so that when he had to withdraw from the presidency because of Watergate, the Russians were shocked beyond words. It was difficult to explain to them why the United States would want to deprive itself of such a fine president. There was no American in recent history, with the exception of FDR [Franklin D. Roosevelt], who made as fine an impression on the Russians as Nixon did. They couldn't understand why, as I say, we would allow Watergate to deprive us of that kind of leadership.

BASIAGO: A general trend I noted--perhaps it's too interpretive on my part--but perhaps there is some

difference here that developed. Taking Dartmouth five as an example, it seemed that the contributions of the American delegates were largely expansive. For instance, in Dartmouth five you have Franklin [D.] Murphy recommending the need for exchange of scholars, you have Bucky's spontaneous discourses, you have Patricia Roberts Harris discussing the need to exchange families, and these sort of things. I find in that conference, and in many others, the Soviets in a more recriminatory sort of mind-set: Georgi [A.] Arbatov critical of Zbigniew Brzezinski's idea promoting evolutionary changes in the Soviet Union; Boris [N.] Polevoi talking about the need for the publication of Russian books. Generally, was this difference in the attitudes shared between the two sets of delegates?

COUSINS: What you may have missed there was the moderating influence of other Americans who may not have agreed fully with what their colleagues were saying. Generally, the Americans didn't go at the Russians as a block or a team. The Americans were there as individuals, who could agree or disagree with everyone at the table, Americans or Russians. The Soviets, however--this may be responsive to your question--seemed to be an entity, and seemed to be orchestrated, certainly in those middle years of the Dartmouth Conference, when we began to get into serious

issues.

BASIAGO: It seemed like an issue of optimism, sometimes, versus pessimism. I guess you've ascribed their defensiveness, perhaps, to a group strategy.

COUSINS: Sure, sure.

BASIAGO: During Dartmouth five, the issue of Middle East peace emerged, as it did may times thereafter. You suggested the crucial need for third-party mediation in the Middle East.

COUSINS: Yes.

BASIAGO: What other Middle East peace proposals have you made during the Dartmouth conferences, and what significant ideas have been contributed by others, regarding the Middle East problem?

COUSINS: Let me answer your first question. I regarded all the issues we discussed at the Dartmouth conferences as dramatic support for the proposition that these two countries couldn't settle these problems by themselves, nor should they be expected to. By an authoritative third party, I was thinking not just of a mediator, but of a mechanism which could deal with the specific situations, even though the participating countries might not themselves agree. That's what law is--something that transcends interested parties, especially lawbreakers. So I would keep hammering at that principle, year in and year

out. I would not have blamed the Russians or the Americans if they had just politely left the table, because they'd heard it before. But they were very polite, and they didn't.

BASIAGO: During Dartmouth six, in 1971, the issue of ecological preservation emerged for the first time. At this conference, Dr. Thomas [F.] Malone of the University of Connecticut and academician E. K. Fedorov delivered papers on environmental issues of international concern, and particularly the interaction of man and the environment. What was the outcome of the dialogue about the environment begun between the U.S. and the USSR at Kiev?

COUSINS: Context. The mid-sixties was the period in which the word "environment" came into the vocabulary, not just as a neighborhood, but as the delicate balance of factors that could sustain life. You probably recall that in '66, I headed the New York City commission that set up the first major environmental control official body. I'd been trying, from the mid-sixties, to get the question of the environment as the main topic. And two or three meetings later that eventuated.

The Russians, if my memory is correct, tended to regard this as a problem that was peculiar to the capitalist world. That industrial waste, or military

waste, would be handled with respect to cost that would affect profit, and therefore society could expect to suffer. Whereas, in the people's society, the decision would always be automatic in the people's favor. Such at least was the general context with which they seemed to react to what was being said. But the whole concept of the world as a single ecosystem, where the plankton in the seas if destroyed would affect oxygen levels for them as well as for everyone else; the fact that a sudden thaw in the ice cap because of a hothouse reaction would produce tidal waves--this was not yet in their thinking a major problem. So when they listened to us, I had the feeling that they thought we were just being autobiographical. They could be properly sympathetic, but for themselves they didn't see it as something that could occur in their society.

In subsequent years, however, that has changed. Lake Baikal, which is one of the key natural assets of the Russians, began to be contaminated. This came as a very great shock to the Russians, because it's the deepest lake of its kind in the world. The contamination of that lake, as news of it began to seep out, was deeply disturbing. Since that time, especially under [Mikhail S.] Gorbachev, environmental issues have tended to come front and center. So I have no doubt that if that were the topic of

discussion today, there would be more of a tendency to regard it as a common problem than as one that is the product of ideology.

BASIAGO: I was wondering. I found as late as the early eighties Jacques[-Yves] Cousteau was identifying the Soviet's environmental policies as the worst in the world. You seem to suggest that there's a more hopeful outlook under Gorbachev.

COUSINS: Yes, much more.

BASIAGO: Regarding Dartmouth seven in 1972, I found that David Rockefeller's working group negotiated in such areas of U.S.-Soviet trade as pricing, credits, and monetary control. I'm wondering, given his chairmanship of Chase Manhattan Bank, etc., who he was representing? Was he representing the U.S. government or American private commercial interests? Was he consulting with the [United States] Department of Commerce and other public agencies at this time?

COUSINS: I don't think he was representing anyone. He's strong enough as an individual to be mindful of all the multiple factors involved. He's aware of the interests of the United States, aware of interests of the private sector, to be sure. He tends to bring all these factors together and gives a proportionate account. The Russians are far more attentive when he speaks than to anyone else

on the delegation. All their notebooks come out--they listen very keenly. His own presentations are very balanced, very sober, very respectful of the Soviet problems and difficulties, which the Russians appreciate. I think they are prepared, almost, to take anything he says on faith.

BASIAGO: A stumbling block throught the early 1970s--something discussed at the conferences at great length--was the issue of U.S. congressional approval of Most-Favored-Nation status for the Soviet Union and its attendant linkage to the issue of emigration from the Soviet Union. What was your particular position on that issue? Were you willing to forego the emigration?

COUSINS: No, but let me go back a bit. The momentum of the experience with Rockefeller was still pushing me along, and I began to think of the '74 meeting. McGeorge Bundy and Bill [D.] Moyers had brought me in to see the president [Lyndon B. Johnson] knowing what I had done on behalf of President [John F.] Kennedy. They thought that this would be a very good opportunity to get across a point of view on the Vietnam War. I was asked to tell [Nikita S.] Khrushchev that the United States was interested in a nonmilitary settlement of the war. Did I talk about this?

BASIAGO: I believe so, where you had Rockefeller leave for Moscow?

COUSINS: Then you got that--that was the thing that came to mind. So we'll skip over that. With respect to emigration and Most-Favored-Nation, it was very difficult to separate these issues, or other issues. If the Americans were pressing for something, there was a natural tendency to say to the Russians, "You can't expect much progress while this is going on," or, "You've got to understand what the effect is on Congress of the reduced visas." At Dartmouth, for example, we had our tenth anniversary, I guess it was, or the tenth meeting. We had some congressmen there. Mo [Morris K.] Udall was one of them, and Senator [Charles M.] Mathias [Jr.], maybe, was there.

BASIAGO: Oh, at Williamsburg? In '79?

COUSINS: Well, no, this would be at Dartmouth. Earlier than that.

BASIAGO: Oh, in '72?

COUSINS: Yes. There was a shutdown of Jewish emigration after a very large exodus the previous year. I think the previous year, or two years earlier, it was almost up to a hundred thousand. Then suddenly it shut down again. Nixon was then in office, I believe, is that right? It seemed to us that the Russians didn't understand the impact of that entire Jewish question, not only to respect emigration in general, but [Natan] Scharansky in particular, and some

individual cases. So we arranged for the Russians to bring a group of key people to meet with people in the administration, including Pete [Peter G.] Peterson, who was then secretary of commerce. I think the Russians really understood this problem with respect to all its parts. After they went back, I got the message from Arbatov that I'd be pleased by what was going to happen. They did open up again. At Dartmouth that year, the Dartmouth students put on some demonstrations on that issue, and I think the Russians were rather startled--perhaps even shocked--by the depth of feeling. I don't think that they believed that Americans felt that deeply about it.

TAPE NUMBER: XVIII, SIDE TWO

JULY 13, 1988

BASIAGO: One of your original tasks or goals, perhaps, in approaching the Soviets was, I understand, to persuade them to sign a copyright convention and to stop reprinting American authors' works without permission or royalties.

COUSINS: Yes.

BASIAGO: Over the next dozen years after the conferences began, you were instrumental in behind-the-scenes negotiations for the Soviet Union's acceptance of the Universal Copyright Convention in 1973. Did you engage in this mission at the behest of interests in this country? If so, who were they, and were you remunerated or on a consultancy basis? And a third question would be, how were you able to finally achieve a breakthrough on this issue, given the difference in legal structure between the two nations?

COUSINS: The first intervention, as I remember it, came about as a result of a call from Adlai [E.] Stevenson. He had been representing the Authors [Guild], I think. Knowing that I was going over there, he asked me if I couldn't tilt a lance in the right direction. I had already raised that issue anyway, and I wrote about this somewhere, maybe in the [Saturday] Review, I'm not sure. It was quite constant, because the Russians made a great

deal of the fact that they published far many more American authors than we published Russian authors, and also that individual books--American books--had far greater circulation than important Russian books did here. When they would talk about all the American authors that they published, I would bring up the fact that it was done without their permission. And I was rather pointed about it. I said that I don't see how any country can be proud of theft. Literary theft is no different from other forms of theft, and that's what it is. They were surprised that I would use language as strong as that. They felt that we ought to be pleased that American authors were being published. The question was, are they also being paid? Well, some were only if they were there, and they would get an envelope with some rubles in it, one hundred, two hundred rubles. But there was nothing systematic or orderly in terms of a royalty statement. When I met with Khrushchev, I brought this up as a major issue and said, "It doesn't concern a lot of people, but it does concern writers that work for a living." He tried to go down the same line that the writers did, or the other people in the Dartmouth Conference did, which is that there's an adverse balance of literary trade, and so forth. But I said, "That's an entirely separate issue. The only issue that's involved here is whether you have the right to appropriate

the works of American authors without their consent and without specific arrangements authorizing you to do so." He finally yielded on that. He had me talk to two people, one, the minister of culture, and the other, a woman who was connected with the finance ministry. When I spoke to Khrushchev the second time, I said I hoped he would forgive me for bringing this thing up again, but it does represent in my mind a very important moral issue. I think he-- I'm trying to think exactly how he put it. He said, "I think we're going to work this out," something like that. And we did.

BASIAGO: Thus, they accepted a major element of our Constitution. [laughter] I noted that after President Nixon's departure from our government, President [Gerald R.] Ford's emergence, it seems that the tenor of the discussions between the Soviets and the Americans broke down significantly. By 1977, the U.S. really had to come out gunning, presenting to the Soviets a list of criticisms regarding military expansion by the Soviet Union. Between the high point of 1972--when they were so pleased with President Nixon, and the conferences resulted in such fruitful dialogue regarding trade and scientific research--The Apollo Soyuz Test Project, as I imagine, was a fruit of that. What happened? Can it all be attributable to domestic forces, or was there anything manifest at the

conferences themselves that resulted, or--

COUSINS: You see, there were a number of flash points during that whole period: the Middle East, Africa, Germany, the Far East, the Jewish question. We were very lucky when only one of those issues was a point of tension between the two countries. The attitude of the Americans at Dartmouth was that the greater the number of issues, and the greater the tensions resulting from those issues, the greater the need to maintain relations and dialogue. Officially, the United States didn't always agree with that. Nations tend to operate on a tit-for-tat basis. Retaliation, rather than moral initiative, seems to be the rule. So sometimes we had to persist, despite and not because of the American position. But even in doing that, we had people there who were able to state the American position, which they did very ably, with respect to those issues. But there were many times when we were approaching a saturation of tension, and even though we met, that was reflected. On one of the meetings on the Near East, I was on the Middle East task force with Landrum R. Bolling.

BASIAGO: Was Steve [Stephen J.] Solarz there at that particular--?

COUSINS: Yes, at one of them. And Charles [W.] Yost, the former American ambassador to the UN [United Nations]. It was at the time of Angola, and I said, "I don't think that

you gentlemen seem to recognize that you've come to the limit of your probes. The very next move in this direction--Africa or the Middle East--you will find that the United States will be very hard in its response. We've come to the end of the line. You've gone about as far as you can go without producing an effect that will be not just not pleasing but very disturbing. You've got to decide whether you want to run that risk." On their side, some of the Russians took me aside and tried to draw me out. I think they knew what we were trying to say.

BASIAGO: So you were sort of putting them on notice regarding making one nation captive, through all those years in the mid- and late seventies and eighties? I guess things really did start to fall apart, to some degree, with the tension. As you say, it became saturated. After '72, '73, you had the U.S. going on nuclear alert during the '73 crisis in the Middle East. Was there any direct discussion of how close the superpowers had again come to nuclear confrontation?

COUSINS: Yes.

BASIAGO: With such an extensive background of the '62 crisis, do you remember how this one played itself out in any particular discussions?

COUSINS: My memory is not as vivid on this as it was on '62. But I have the feeling that by this time it was

almost a tacit agreement between the two sides that we'd make our representations but not dig in and then go on to see whether we could build bridges. That's my impression.

BASIAGO: When we last spoke, you talked about the questionable result or outcome of discussions about the issue of nuclear proliferation. You seemed to suggest that both nations persist in being unwilling to practice what they preach, and they'd rather sort of counsel other nations not to acquire nuclear stockpiles, while not addressing their own buildups. Weren't there some victories, though, in the step-by-step process of preventing nuclear proliferation?

COUSINS: Well, here, you see, you had people on both sides of the table who had identical views. Which is to say that it was not only possible but necessary to prevent the proliferation. The smaller nations seemed to feel that the large nations had a special dispensation to proceed in this direction. The Russians have always had this view of it, I think, modified recently, to be sure, but for the most part pretty settled around the idea of a bipolar world. The role of the United Nations or any other collective or multilateral approach to peace seemed rather wispy and soft to them. They liked the idea of the United States and the Soviet Union being equal partners. The word "parity"

always came up in their discussions. Parity with respect to arms, parity with respect to other approaches in the world. But they didn't talk much about parity in obligations towards the rest of the world. Nor did we, I suppose.

BASIAGO: I noted that as a result of the 1975 conference in Moscow, and the 1976 conference at Rio Rico [Arizona], it seems that the two superpowers were getting down to brass tacks regarding nuclear proliferation--at least opposition to transfer reprocessing plants and enrichment facilities, creation of a multinational fuel facility, and these sorts of things. Did these eventuate, these sorts of intermediary preventive measures?

COUSINS: They represented a tendency--or a tropism--that eventually, I think, was reflected in policy. But they didn't lead at that time to any recognizable specific steps.

BASIAGO: The 1977 conference in Jurmala [Latvia] was, as I noted, a dramatic confrontation over the issue of the recent Soviet push, military expansion.

COUSINS: Afghanistan, you mean?

BASIAGO: Afghanistan. The U.S. listed six things that they found alarming: increasing effort toward introducing new systems with semistrategic or grey area capability; the improvement of Warsaw Pact forces relative to NATO forces

since SALT II; expanded military aid and assistance to liberation movements, including supporting repressive measures in the Third World--

COUSINS: Yes. That laundry list led, I believe, almost in a direct line, to greater emphasis on working groups in these fields. Because it seemed to us that the approach that we'd been taking was one in which we would have catharsis through proclamation, and it seemed to us that what we ought to do is to stick with these issues. Then we developed working groups in each of these areas. When David [O.] Mathews became the head of the [Charles F.] Kettering Foundation, the conferences shifted into a much higher gear as a result, because he had developed considerable experience with such techniques. He was able to put money into the work groups, with the result that there was hardly ever a time when one or more of these groups were not meeting. Some of them would meet two times a year or so. That would help to prepare the agenda for the plenary, apart from the good that it did in the meantime. I think that the work groups probably accomplished more than the plenaries.

BASIAGO: Were you sufficiently pleased by the answers you got, regarding all these issues?

COUSINS: By the what?

BASIAGO: All these issues that emerged in 1977 at Jurmala

there. For instance, another one would be their continued testing of antisatellite weapons, and the disparity between their troop strength, their tank strength, their military R&D expenditures [and ours]. With such an investment that you had made for fifteen years, and trying to reason with them--

COUSINS: My points of disillusion, and possible breakaway, were caused more by treatment of individuals than by these issues, which I just took for granted. The tension over these issues was entirely predictable. We've been able to discount them on that basis. But the human issues--the exile, the imprisonment, or the mistreatment of key figures--that was what really disturbed me and almost caused me to quit at one point, as I suggested to you earlier.

BASIAGO: In [The] Pathology of Power, you describe the Pentagon abuses of the [Ronald W.] Reagan era. Given that to some degree the rationale for the Reagan era defense buildup in this country came about as a result of the Soviet expansion in the late seventies, how did you tie the two together? How did you put the Reagan era defense explosion in perspective? Did you think it was necessary, as the eighties began?

COUSINS: In order to feel that it was necessary, you had to feel that they were useful in the first place. There

are two entirely different contexts with which you could view what was happening in the relationships of the two countries. One which had to do with the belief that superior forces were a relevant response to the problem. The other was to look beyond that and recognize that throw weight, megatonage, superiority in this or that respect, all these were part of something that was totally unworkable anyway. To descend into that kind of exchange would have usefulness only for those who believed that they could make a basic difference. They could make some difference, to be sure, in terms of what countries did as a result and whether they would create a context in which they wouldn't be interested in getting on to real things. But if you kept your eye on the main ball--which had to do with the control of force, rather than the pursuit of force--I think you could regard all these fumblings and maneuverings as part of the total but very volatile irrelevance.

BASIAGO: I have two concluding questions. One is that, just generally, as a result of your experience with the conferences, have you developed any rules of thumb that result in the most successful negotiating with the Soviets, given the overriding importance of that pursuit? You mentioned how the conferences have scouted the ground for agreements on cultural exchanges, direct air connections,

trade deals, and nitty-gritty things such as the copyright agreement and certain arms control treaties. What accomplishments of the talks do you deem the most important as a result?

COUSINS: Well, let's take your first question. A somewhat different-- It seems to me that a lifeline, rather fragile but nonetheless visible, was being built all these years. You had a solid mutual belief that, despite anything that would be said by either side, this lifeline could sustain the burden of those differences, and that our job was to strengthen it until it became a genuine bridge. That also we were training people for positions in government, whether in Congress, or on the executive branch on both sides. That in times approaching a crisis--when each side was asking itself, "Are there any resources that we can count on? Is there anything useful that might be done or that has been done?"--you had built up a sufficient cadre on both sides of very influential people. They recognized possibilities of dialogue, which before they might have dismissed out of hand. There's always a tendency as you approach a showdown situation to assume that the other side speaks only the language of force. You want to communicate in a way that they will understand. You've seen that. It's especially true in the Middle East. One significant thing that's happening here is that we're training people

to recognize that that cliché--the other side understands only the language of force--was very dangerous and also represented a form of international illiteracy. There's the desire to make the extra effort, "Let's go back and see what they think. Let's go back and present this point of view."

I recognized through it all that we were limited because of the bilateral approach to world problems. I thought that the main purpose that would be served by the Dartmouth meetings was to create something outside themselves, a mechanism that could be sustained even in times of breakdown, a mechanism that would be useful for other countries as well. I kept harping on that, as I did in fact at the last meeting. I got a great deal more support at this last meeting for that point of view than I can ever remember. This may be because of Gorbachev. They were not chained to the usual rote, and they were saying things to us about themselves that we had said to them about themselves--acknowledging things. So when you could speak to them now and ask them frankly whether you're in a position now, for the first time, you feel, to make a genuine contribution to the peace-- Surely you must recognize that it's not what we say to each other or what we do with each other that's going to be as important as what we do together with respect to the rest of the

world. And how we address ourselves to the basic problems that threaten the peace, that will affect us, even though we may not be primarily involved in those disputes. What effective mechanism of resolution are we going to create? I found the Russians at this last meeting being willing to think seriously about what was involved in world order to a far greater extent than ever before. And that, as I say, was a reflection of the fact that they were willing, to a far greater extent, to think seriously about their own society than ever before. It was a very useful meeting.

TAPE NUMBER: XIX, SIDE ONE

AUGUST 1, 1988

BASIAGO: With the publication of **Anatomy of an Illness as Perceived by the Patient: Reflections on Healing and Regeneration** (1979), you called for the development of medical evidence to show how the positive emotions--purpose, determination, love, hope, faith, the will to live, even festivity--can affect biological states. "Suppose it could be proved," you wondered, "that such attitudes could help activate healing forces in the endocrine and the immune systems." Later, with a $2 million gift from Joan B. Kroc and an additional contribution of $5 million from Mrs. Burton Bettingen, you have spent the last decade developing a dream of a program within the UCLA School of Medicine in mind-body studies [UCLA Program in Psychoneuroimmunology]. What have been the program's significant discoveries, and what did this departure in your career mean in your personal life, as you left the Saturday Review [of Literature]?

COUSINS: I had many reasons for leaving the Saturday **Review**, some of which were unrelated to the sequence of events that led me into the field of medicine. But just looking at the closing events at the Saturday Review, Jack [Jacob R.] Cominsky, who had been my business partner, had died. While we had good business managers to take over, I

found increasingly that the publishing responsibility for the magazine came to my desk. I found myself almost a referee between the advertising department and circulation department, to say nothing of their confrontations with the editorial department. It was not just differences of opinion on the staff--these were standard operating procedures. Every business organization has them. But the job of mediator was distracting. I wanted to concentrate on the editorial part of the magazine. The man who took Jack Cominsky's place was intelligent, capable, but didn't have Jack's drive.

Then, too, I discovered things that were deeply troubling to me. One of the problems of a magazine has to do with the way in which you acquire and keep your subscribers. This, really, is the lifeblood of a magazine. The rate of renewal subscription is the key number on any magazine, because if you fall below a certain percentage, then you're in a deficit situation. This turns on itself, because it's the one figure that your advertisers look at. They don't want to support a magazine unless it's being carefully followed by its readers. And to them the renewal rate is a critical factor. We had had one of the highest--if not the highest--renewal rate, I think, of American magazines in this general field. I felt, since I found that this was increasingly my

responsibility with Jack's death, that you had to innovate, because subscription promotion costs were rising very fast. It seemed to me that the figure that magazines were looking at, namely, what does it cost to obtain a new subscriber, was the wrong figure. The operative figure pertained to renewals. When, for example, you sent out circulation promotion letters, you would look at the return rate, 1 percent, 2 percent, 3 percent, whatever. Again, I felt that was a false figure. The question was not how much it cost to send out a thousand letters, but what was the cost of getting a thousand letters read. The fact that you delivered x number of letters in the mails didn't mean anything unless those letters were being opened. Yet everyone was concentrating on the cost of putting the letter into the mail. It seemed to me that if we actually increased the cost of the mailing and put out a first-class letter, with a stamp that was obviously first-class, that this was the thing that gets the attention of the potential buyers and marks the distinction between junk mail and regular mail. Therefore, if you can have twice as many letters read with a first-class stamp, then you're actually ahead of the game financially. So we innovated in that, and it worked out very well. We were getting a very high rate of subscription return on those direct mail letters.

Then I happened to see--a friend gave me--a new

mailing that we had sent out. I groaned when I looked at it, because I saw that instead of the stamp, the first-class stamp, we had the printed permit, with "first class" in small letters. In short, it looked like regular third-class mail, like junk mail, but we were paying first-class prices to make something look like junk mail. I could hardly believe this thing. I came to the office with blood in my eye and found out that Mr. [S. Spencer] Grin had figured out a way of saving a little money by printing it on, so you would not have that miniscule expense of having a stamp attached. The fact that he didn't understand any of this was appalling to me. Other things were happening on the magazine, and I didn't want to have my closing days at the **Saturday Review** with a winding-down feeling--hating to come into the office, hating to pull people apart, hating to have to look at every single letter to make sure that it was done exactly right. All my wonderful warm feelings about all my years at the magazine, you see, were eroding very fast. So I decided to leave the magazine while my feelings were still warm.

Meanwhile, as you say, there was this great question in my mind that had come up as a result of my illness. I became convinced that the way in which I thought about my illness was a factor in getting me out of it. The fact that I did have a measure of control contrasted with the

loss of control that most patients feel. The fact that I wasn't helpless, that I wasn't panicky. All these things, it seemed to me, were factors in overcoming a rather serious illness. I wanted to see this belief projected on a larger canvas, to find out whether the observations were correct. If so, then there's a great deal that could be done to help people who were seriously ill. It seemed to me that public thinking about health was almost disastrous, because we were being educated for weakness and not for strength. We were being educated in the inadequacies of the human body, instead of the essential robustness of the human body. So we became timid, insecure, fretful about ourselves, hypochondriacs and sissies. This all fit in, as I say, with the way we thought about illness. We tended to become helpless, panicky, and we're setting an environment for the rapid advance of the disease. All these things seemed to fit together. So my decision to come into the medical community was based on this obsession to find the proof, or help to create it, that the way in which we thought about illness could have a bearing on the outcome of illness.

BASIAGO: I'd like to start at the beginning, organizationally. I understand that Dean Sherman [M.] Mellinkoff of the [UCLA] School of Medicine played a key role in the formation of the program that you now direct.

Early on, he created a "think tank" to meet with you for the purpose of exploring the general field of biology of the emotions. This group included Dr. Fritz [Fredrick C.] Redlich, former head of psychiatry at Yale [University]. Am I incorrect?

COUSINS: [Milton] Greenblatt.

BASIAGO: You're speaking about the Greenblatt group?

COUSINS: Yes, the Greenblatt group had a different cast, and it included Ivan [N.] Mensh, Shelley [E.] Taylor--

BASIAGO: Was this the seminal group after you met with Mellinkoff?

COUSINS: Yes. Mellinkoff introduced me, as "Jolly" [Louis J.] West did, to the other people, beginning with Fritz Redlich, but I don't think they were on this think tank group that met with me when I first came here.

BASIAGO: I'm just trying to trace the priorities that were set and by whom. What sorts of contributions were made by various key people, as it was founded? This initial group, what did it achieve?

COUSINS: Yes, the initial group formed by the dean was chaired by Milton Greenblatt. It had six or eight persons on it. Greenblatt's office can probably give you the list of participants. But Ivan Mensh, who was one of the key people in the school of psychiatry and frequently mentioned as the successor to Jolly West, now retired, was one of

those on the group. We had some good discussions having to do with psychosomatic medicine, I guess would be the best name for it. At least that was the name that was operational at the time. I would use this group as the sounding board and bring to them accounts of experiences I'd had with patients or things that I'd come across in my reading in this general area that I mentioned before--namely, the impact of attitudes, ideas, and emotions on illness and treatment. I found that Ivan Mensh's comments were very helpful. He'd had a great deal of experience in this field, as had Greenblatt. It did play a part, it seems to me, in confirming my feeling not just that the connection was real, and that disease as a reflection of mental states is not folklore, but [that it was] a scientific fact. And that we were right in trying not just to think about the existence of such cases, but about the possible pathways, the physiological pathways through which attitudes and emotions made their registrations on human physiology. So that was an important first step.

BASIAGO: I'm curious how key medical professionals here received your ideas, as expressed in Anatomy of an Illness, and then, what agenda was set for more concrete research applications?

COUSINS: I was not without advice in these matters. Franklin [D.] Murphy, a physician and former chancellor of

UCLA, who was instrumental in bringing me to UCLA, spoke to me about the medical viewpoint. He felt that for the most part physicians would be very critical of my notions that attitudes could make a difference in disease. They were looking for hard morphological evidence, and they thought that was the only thing that counted. But he said there are some whose own experience has led them to a wider view of this. Greenblatt told me substantially the same thing, which is that I'd have a hard time convincing doctors that laughter conferred any physiological benefits, especially in disease. Charles [R.] Kleeman, Chuck Kleeman, of the CHEER program [Center for Health Enhancement, Education, and Research], was sympathetic and tried to explain why doctors were very reluctant to attach value to these notions. They had been trained in science, molecular biology, physical causes, physical effects, physical factors.

But far more important than these caveats, to me, was the fact that the medical community here couldn't have been more supportive personally or gracious. I was made to feel very much at home, and I was brought into the inner circle and participated in various councils. The university itself was very supportive. When, for example, Dean Mellinkoff was entertaining the [University of California Board of] Regents' committee, which periodically came to

look at the medical school--what was happening--he had me come to speak about my interests and my work. When Chancellor [Charles E.] Young's office wanted to make a presentation about UCLA and selected a faculty member who would talk about his work and interests, I was selected to do that, not just for the medical school, but for the entire faculty, representing that kind of work. By that time, of course, I'd learned the semantics of medicine, and I was able to put my ideas in a proportionate setting, so that doctors would not take exception to it in terms of the approach, by connecting it to a certain tradition. I learned how to make those connections. After a while, I was metabolized.

It became interesting to me to see that doctors themselves would ask me to see friends who were doctors who were ill, or doctors who were ill themselves would ask me if I would talk to them. Because they recognized that there was an extra dimension involved in strategy for recovery, other than medications. How they had to think of it themselves, especially if they had a life-threatening illness. Nothing in their training had prepared them to confront those issues, and yet those issues had a bearing on the outcome of the illness. Because it stands to reason that if you're going to be depressed, panicky, as a result of your illness, then the environment of medical treatment

can be compromised. As I went along, it was interesting to me to see that somewhere between 25 and 33 percent of the patients I was asked to see for a morale boost were physicians themselves who were ill.

BASIAGO: Was that the sole reason, or was there some strategy here, institutionally, that there would be some maximum benefit from you dealing directly with physicians?

COUSINS: The only benefit, I think, that was an issue had to do with the need to provide optimal care and do everything possible. You see, it was not just a matter of reaching out for the best medical treatment but enabling the patients to reach inside themselves. I'd been involved in a concept of the brain as apothecary and received a great deal of support on that from Dr. [Richard] Bergland of Harvard [University], who had been itemizing secretions produced by the brain that were of use to the body, especially in illness. He supplied the scientific components. He identified the secretions and also the ability of the brain to combine these secretions in writing prescriptions for the body. The next question is this: How do you make use of it; how do you tap into it? Under circumstances of panic, fear, and depression, the ability of the body to summon these forces tends to be vitiated. So increasingly, what I was talking about began to receive scientific verification. Only partial, to be sure, but at

least we were moving along a certain track.

BASIAGO: I'd like to explore how the work that you've conducted here has dovetailed with the research of others here. For instance, you've mentioned Jolly West at NPI [Neuropsychiatric Institute]. Was there any direct collaboration with his ongoing work in neuropsychiatry?

COUSINS: Jolly West, as administrative head of NPI, of course, was not in the laboratory. He was in his office. But he had very deep interests in this field, and he helped to connect me with the people in his department who were in a position to do the good work. For example, he had a meeting in his office with Fawzy [I.] Fawzy, who had been thinking along the same lines that I did in dealing with cancer patients. He felt that we ought to have a structured relationship, because Fawzy wanted to do some research which could prove some of these propositions. So Jolly was very helpful in setting the stage for these developments here at UCLA.

BASIAGO: There are some other individuals on the Kroc [Foundation] advisory committee, and I'm wondering how your activities have complemented theirs, and theirs, yours. How about Carmine [D.] Clemente, the anatomy specialist?

COUSINS: He was the head of the Brain Research Institute [BRI]. After I came here, I naturally gravitated towards the Brain Research Institute, because of its research

capability in dealing with the kinds of issues that concerned me. I developed a close relationship with Carmine Clemente. He brought me into meetings of the BRI, and that led to some conferences, as well as to a relationship with one of the key people in the Brain Research Institute. You'll have to remind me to talk about David Murdock, especially in connection with Carmine Clemente.

But at any rate, when we set up a task force in psychoneuroimmunology, this was made possible by the Kroc gift. I wanted to get the best advice I could on how to structure this grant or gift. Jolly West and Sherman Mellinkoff and Carmine Clemente agreed to serve as the advisory committee. But I also went to Franklin Murphy, a doctor himself, and all four agreed that we ought to have a working group which could steer the development of this project. This was the background for the creation of the task force on psychoneuroimmunology. By talking to these advisers, it became clear to me that different fields had to be represented on this task force, because psychoneuroimmunology was really a science of interactions, rather than the pursuit of any one branch of medicine. We're looking at the central nervous system, we're looking at the endocrine system, we're looking at the immune system. So we tried to draw together a group with

expertise in these directions, but also a group of people whose field of knowledge would lead them into other disciplines, rather than away from it. These habits of work recognized that we were dealing with a whole new set of interreactions, and that was how we created the task force.

BASIAGO: You've mentioned how, in your meetings with twelve to fifteen patients a week, you often deal with cancer patients. What has been your involvement with the work in oncology conducted by Dr. Claus [B.] Bahnson? And you mentioned Fawzy Fawzy. I'm interested in the sort of counseling you do with cancer patients to stimulate their will to live and their recovery.

COUSINS: Counseling with cancer patients involves different doorways. One of them, of course, is the Boyer cancer clinic [Boyer-John Wayne Oncology Center] upstairs. There they have a support group of cancer patients and their families, and I'm asked to meet with those patients as a group. Then you have patients who are in need of deep psychological support, because their emotional needs are no less critical than their physical ones. They come to this office, or I go to see them in the hospital, as the case may be. Some of those patients I see at the request of their physicians, or those who call up themselves. Some I see at the request of the university or

the medical school. But the need, in most of these cases, is to help people confront the illness. Nothing in their education or experience has prepared them to meet this challenge. They have a tendency to buckle under it. Suddenly you get a catastrophic diagnosis. How do you think about it? How do you cope with it?

Now, physicians don't have time to spend with patients to the extent that this requires. And here we come to a very serious problem in medicine today. Medical students spend years learning how to diagnose, but only minutes learning how to deliver the message of the diagnosis, or coping with the effects of the way they deliver it. The environment of medical treatment doesn't receive as much attention in medical schools as pathological organisms, or anatomy, or physiology, and yet these are primary factors--in some cases, transcendent ones. This requires doctors who understand what goes on in the mind of the patient, understand the cause of the problem, and the way their mind reacts to what the doctor is saying. It always takes time and involves the art of communication. But again, those communication skills are not as carefully developed as diagnostic skills or other skills. Yet they can be as important as any single factor, even if it pertains only to compliance. Doctors have no difficulty in understanding the importance of compliance. Why spend any time with the

patient, if the patient's not going to comply? So while the need for compliance is understood, the factors that go into compliance don't receive as much attention as they need. It's hard, too, if the doctor isn't going to talk to a patient. Since doctors don't get paid for talking to patients, and they get paid for technology and procedures, this is what's going to happen. So the technology represents the major aspect of connection between the patient and the physician. So much of the emphasis is on diagnosis that the emotional factors that have figured in the illness may be somewhat obscured, and the emotional factors that get in the way of effective treatment may be obscured.

BASIAGO: You've listed a lack of academic preparation and sort of professional practice, professional demeanor, as two reasons why physicians so often leave patients in a state of emotional devastation following a diagnosis. What are some other factors that contribute to this?

COUSINS: Every patient is an individual universe, and the factors vary with the patient. That's why the doctor's job is to find out who the patient is and try to know at least as much about the patient as the disease that is being treated. Because that patient is going to put his own stamp on that disease. But again, it takes time to find out, so everything is involved here. You get a loop here

which tends to put the patient and the physician in different camps. Another thing developing is the conflict of interest between physician and patient. The doctor has been educated by his lawyers to be as explicit as possible about the nature of an illness and not to leave any doubt about things that might happen on the downside. Because if they should, the doctor doesn't want to be sued. But not all the downside alerts may be relevant or necessary. We talk a great deal about giving a patient false hopes. We don't talk enough about giving patients false fears.

BASIAGO: Your work represents a profound critique of medicine though, doesn't it, in the sense that you essentially are describing modern physicians as obsessed with the morphological dimensions of illness and overrelying on technology? What sort of reception are you getting at UCLA, which has a state-of-the-art technical facility in medicine?

COUSINS: I'm not departing from the tradition, I'm trying to assert it. The tradition of medicine is one in which the requirements of a patient-physician relationship are primary, not secondary. The tradition calls for bedside skills, and for the art of medicine, not just the science or practice of medicine. The way in which you take a history, the importance given to that history--which is to say, knowing about the emotional causes of any illness--

these are traditional. So I'm not doing anything except trying to work within that tradition. The tradition, however, experienced an abrupt change with the development of modern technology. Because now it is not just the doctor and the stethoscope, the doctor coming to a determination himself, based on his own abilities and not just the book learning, to arrive at an understanding of a patient's problem. But now we turn the patient over to high tech. That is, I think, a departure from the traditional medicine. Now, you ask, how do doctors react to this? Fortunately, there are enough doctors who still are part of that great tradition. I think that Sherman Mellinkoff is an example. So that I'm not a pariah or a carper. I'm not criticizing from without the tradition but from within it.

BASIAGO: I'm curious, what studies have been carried out here, under your supervision or with your informed participation, to increase our understanding of the interaction between the brain, the endocrine system, and the immune system? In your work **Head First: The Biology of Hope** I see this referred to a number of times. But I wish that to some degree you could flush out your ideas with actual research studies that have been oriented in this direction.

COUSINS: There are different people on the faculty, you

see, who have been wanting to test out their ideas along this direction. The Kroc fund enabled us to provide research monies. I decided that when I received the Kroc fund, it would be a good idea to take half that money and provide support for similar research being done around the country or the world, because it was important to replicate the studies and also to have centers come at these conclusions independently. So we set up a number of research projects at UCLA. Each of the members of the task force had one or more projects to advance. These were all complementary. Then you had members of the faculty, not just in the School of Medicine, but in psychology, who were interested in working along these lines. We were able to support that work and maybe a dozen more projects here at UCLA, apart from what the task force was doing. Then around the country, you had a lot of efforts going forward that needed help. So we were trying to pursue our goals on many different levels and then coordinate the work.

BASIAGO: An example of one of the research areas that I'm personally fascinated with, and that I'm wondering what sort of work has been done here or elsewhere on-- You write that students undergoing final exams have experienced declines in natural killer cells, a lower percentage of t-lymphocytes, and lower levels of interferon. How has the program successfully established a bridge--some sort of

causal link--between stress and immunity? In other words, why does this happen? If the immune system is designed by nature to protect us from pathological organisms, etc. and various stresses in our environment, why would an intellectual activity, albeit stressful, such as final exams, depress our immunity?

COUSINS: The research into that question was carried out at a number of places, at Harvard [University] under David [C.] McClelland, at Western New England College by Kathleen [M.] Dillon, at Ohio State University by Ronald Glaser and Janice Kiecolt-Glaser. The Ohio State study was perhaps the most comprehensive of all of them and represented an attempt to study students under varying conditions. They were primarily interested in finding out how the human body reacted to stress. So they studied students under ordinary circumstances and then under stressful circumstances. The most stressful circumstance, of course, in a student's life, is final examinations. Here they took measurements having to do mostly with the immune system of these patients, but they also observed the students to see what the incidence of illness was during this time. They discovered that stress indeed was a factor, and that the number of illnesses that took place during this critical time was much greater than at other times. They were able to verify the findings of Hans Selye, who has done some of

the primary work on stress, about the deleterious effects of stress on the human organism. Their measurements were very precise. For example, they measured immunoglobulins; you can measure immunoglobulins in the saliva. As examinations approached, you'd actually have a decrease in IgA [class of immunoglobulin]. In short, the body's protective mechanisms tended to weaken under circumstances of apprehensive anticipations. Similar observations have been made of accountants as the tax deadline approaches. They've discovered, for example, that accountants have much higher cholesterol levels--since tension can produce cholesterol--as the IRS [Internal Revenue Service] deadlines approach, than at other times of the year. An interesting question, of course, is whether the opposite is also true. Which is whether relaxation, good feelings, laughter, will actually increase the body's protective mechanisms. McClelland of Harvard was able to show an increase in immunoglobulins with laughter. Dillon of Western New England, on a broader basis, perhaps, was able to show the same thing. So all these were now beads on a string that we were fitting together. We helped to support a great deal of that work around the country.

BASIAGO: When your work here was just beginning, Carmine Clemente mentioned studies indicating that the brain serves as some sort of intermediary between the endocrine system

and the autonomic nervous system. How is this relevant in subsequent studies, in subsequent beads on the string?

COUSINS: It had to do with a separate question, which is whether a patient's attitude towards illness, or the emotional effects of diagnosis, has physiological effects. Carmine was talking about the interconnections along which these effects travel. All that was happening, actually, was that evidence was being provided to support certain basic ideas that physicians have always known--which is that a patient with a strong will to live has a better chance than a patient who is defeatist. These are not very profound ideas, but now that proof is asked for it has to be provided. It's a reasonable request that anyone who makes a statement having to do with the connection between emotions and health has the burden of proof.

BASIAGO: You dedicated a portion of **Anatomy of an Illness** (and this redounds through later works) to the placebo effect and its negative counterpart, the nocebo effect. In **Anatomy of an Illness**, the placebo effect is largely discussed in anecdotal terms. Have you developed any hard data here in the psychoneuroimmunology program?

TAPE NUMBER: XIX, SIDE TWO

AUGUST 1, 1988

COUSINS: This goes back to the Saturday Review. I was fascinated with the phenomenon of the placebo. Generally, people had been thinking about it in utilitarian terms, which is to say, a way of testing new medications, tested against the placebo result to find out how efficacious a certain medicine may be. But this means that something is happening with nothing, which is to say, if you're measuring something real against something that is not real, and you get an effect with something that's not real, then obviously the reality is that something is happening! I tried to get Al [Albert] Rosenfeld, our science editor on the Saturday Review, to do a study of the placebo for the science section. I had the damnedest time. Even before Al Rosenfeld, I tried to get John Lear to do it. This goes back a few years. I don't know whether they resented having the editor make suggestions, but it never could get moving. So I decided to write an article myself about the placebo for the Saturday Review. This drew upon the research of Henry [K.] Beecher of Harvard [University], and Neal [E.] Miller, of Rockefeller University, and [Lawrence] LeShan, who had written about placebo.

What fascinated me was that the placebo was not merely

a device for testing drugs but caused something to happen in the body as a result of expectations. If someone took what he thought was a medication, 50 percent of the time he would get the effects of what he had been told the medicine would do. Obviously, the human body was able to manufacture its own medications. If such was in fact the case, why wasn't this knowledge put to greater use? Or even more important, what was happening in the human body that enabled the body to convert those expectations into medical effects? That was what fascinated me. The placebo, it seemed to me, was the key to the quest in which I was involved. Which is to say, well, here we actually have the evidence that the body was changing in response to expectations. I thought it very strange that while physicians understood the placebo effect--and no one questioned the placebo effect--the way in which the placebo effect worked was not being investigated. The same physicians who, as I say, would accept the placebo effect, found it difficult to accept the concept that disease could be a reflection of mental states. We were working with the same basic materials; that was why I was so fascinated.

The placebo became my ally in trying to deal with this problem. The article that I wrote anticipated, I think, many pieces that then came into the public press dealing with it. Science magazines began writing about placebos,

and general magazines did. The New York Times carried an article on placebos, the Wall Street Journal ran an article. It still remains a great mystery, but I think it is a wonderful doorway through which to pass if we want to consider this question. The mind that's clear can convert expectations into physiological reality. Consequently, let's find out how this happens and what its implications are in terms of the ability of the individual to cope with disease.

BASIAGO: In a final question for today, I'd like to explore how that effect and those mental powers have evidenced themselves in the most hyperbolic sense here at UCLA. You mentioned that when you founded the program, you wanted to create a "serendipitous arena" for these sorts of things to begin to jell here. What have been some of the most phenomenal displays of mind-over-body powers that you've witnessed over the past decade? You've written in one instance of some sort of demonstration where you watched an individual actually pierce his arm with a lance. In a second anecdote, you refer to your own macrophages increasing by 53 percent, after an episode in which you meditated positively about the kind of world that would come about if we had disarmament. What are some of the most phenomenal instances in which the ability of the mind to affect the body has been demonstrated?

COUSINS: Perhaps the most dramatic such case involved a young woman from San Diego, whose doctor telephoned me saying that she had a breast tumor. It had been biopsied, it was malignant, and he was mandating masectomy as a life-saving measure. She was reluctant to go through the surgery, because she feared it would be mutilation. He asked me if I would try to turn her mind around on this. My name had come up--she had mentioned my name in some connection. He thought that she attached importance to what I said, that I might be able to persuade her to go through with the surgery. The tumor was hardly what you would call casual. It was the size of a lemon. It was like a mass of knotted wires just under the skin. The breast was badly corrugated, and I could understand the physician's apprehension about this. Because after all, if you were going to take some coils--knotted coils--and put them inside the human body, the only way you could get rid of them is by taking them out.

I had a long meeting with this woman. I came to realize that she felt that men were altogether too casual in suggesting to women that they have their breasts removed. They're thinking rather mechanistically. So I went at it very slowly; I thanked her for coming up, and that I had been thinking about it since her doctor's call. I could only think about it in terms of what my

reaction would be if my wife were involved. The first thing I would do would be to get a second opinion; if necessary, a third. She had done that. Then if it became clear to me that the only way we would get rid of this incubus was the surgery, I would try to get the best surgeon in the world. She'd already done that. Then for the rest, I would try to get my wife to approach the surgery in a mood of thanksgiving that we lived at a time when it was possible for modern science to enter her body and pluck out the offendant and free us for a good life. I would try to get my wife to program herself for a good result, so she would be part of it. And this woman said, "Well, how do you program yourself for a good result?" I told her about Elmer [E.] Green's technique, moving your blood around. She sat down here, and I showed her how to do it. When she saw that she had the power to increase the surface temperature of the skin by ten degrees, just as a matter of will--she was astonished when she actually saw the evidence--she said, "Did I really do that?" I said, "Yes, you did that. You have the power to do that. What else can you do?" She said, [whispering] "I can do anything." "Now, the thing you're going to do is to program yourself for a good result. Be thankful you've got the surgery. It's going to work beautifully, and you're going to be able to get rid of it. Practice these

techniques every day now, before the surgery, to give you that sense of control."

The doctor called twelve days later, which was the date of the surgery, to say he'd canceled the surgery, that he'd taken the X ray, and the tumor had completely disappeared. I found this very difficult to believe. I thought of these wires, this mass of wires. How could they be dissolved in such a short period of time? And by what? He said, "Well, I'll send you the X rays. The breast is soft and supple and normal in every way. There's no point, obviously, in going through the operation." That was the most dramatic case I've had here in ten years.

That woman has been very helpful to me, because she has agreed to see other patients, and to talk about their own powers, and the influence of having a partnership with your physician, in which the physician gives you the best that science has to offer, and you give him the best that the human body has to offer. It's a powerful combination. The very first patient that this woman saw had a very good result, too. She had an abdominal tumor, colon. By doing what the doctor had suggested in every respect, but by putting her own resources to work, you got a good result. Chemotherapy doesn't work well under the circumstances, for example, of terror or panic. But if you can just delete the fact of the depression and the panic,

and program yourself for a good result of the chemotherapy, then you find that nausea tends to be reduced. So we're talking now not about replacing medicine, but about creating an environment in which it can do its best.

TAPE NUMBER: XX, SIDE ONE

AUGUST 8, 1988

BASIAGO: When we last spoke, we discussed your arrival at UCLA to set up a program in psychoneuroimmunology. I'm curious about some of the formative experiences you've had in medicine throughout your life that prepared you for this second career in the medical humanities. I understand that as a child you spent a year in a tuberculosis center.

COUSINS: Half a year.

BASIAGO: A half a year? How did this experience contribute to the medical philosophy that you've now developed?

COUSINS: Well, first of all, it enabled me to realize that it was possible to confound predictions, morose predictions, about medical outcomes. At that time, of course, tuberculosis was regarded as a dreaded disease. Today it's been conquered. But sixty-five years ago it was still regarded as a scourge. The fact that you could overcome and actually emerge from it much stronger was a very important lesson to learn. Many years later, I tried to put this down as a philosophical proposition. Namely, that progress is what's left over after you meet an impossible problem. Which is to say, you make progress in this world by overcoming obstacles and not by moving in a path that's all smoothed out. It also, at a very early

age, gave me some sense of interactions between patients and physicians. It gave me a sense that while the physician in one sense is omnipotent and omniscient, ultimately the individual has to make the ultimate decisions. I don't think that anything is more exhilarating than overcoming a serious illness. But as [Albert] Schweitzer said, it does leave you with the deep obligation in your bones to pay back and share in some way. Of course, sharing can be regarded as intrusive and oppressive by other people. [laughter] No one likes to hear about illnesses. But if someone comes to you and asks the questions, then you can give yourself permission to answer according to what you've learned.

BASIAGO: Another very fascinating medical involvement you had prior to UCLA, actually many decades before that, was your project in 1955, when you brought a group of young women from Hiroshima who had survived the blast, the Hiroshima Maidens, to come to the United States for plastic surgery. How did this involvement serve to establish some of your credentials in the medical humanities? What insights into the way that the Japanese girls confronted their illness and treatment did you have in mind when you began your mind-body research here at UCLA?

COUSINS: The Hiroshima Maidens came to the United States in 1954.

BASIAGO: 'Fifty-five.

COUSINS: Nineteen fifty-five, I beg your pardon. But the project that brought them here had started some years earlier. It took a little time to put all the pieces in place. On one of my visits to Hiroshima, I'd met the Reverend Kiyoshi Tanimoto, who was one of the figures in John Hersey's book **Hiroshima**. I went to his church, the Nagarekawa Methodist Church [Nagarekawa United Church of Christ]. Tanimoto was American-educated, went to Emory [University], was ordained in the United States, I believe, as a Methodist minister, had his church in Hiroshima. He told me about a rather poignant group of young women whom he had befriended, who came to his church regularly. These were young women--most of them in their upper teens, some in their early twenties--who had been injured or disfigured by the bombing in 1945. They'd come together as a group for emotional support. In Japan, at least at that time, a disfigured person didn't feel very comfortable. So these young women would go out at night, rather than submit themselves to hostile stares during the daytime. They stayed together, and they found a certain communion with Kiyoshi Tanimoto. On my visit to his church one night, I met these young maidens, who were called the Hiroshima Maidens. It was a very warm, very open exchange that we had. As I looked at them face to face, I just wondered

whether it might not be possible, through plastic surgery, to restore them to a position where they could go out in the daytime. Then, too, a lot of them had the kinds of injuries that might lend themselves to restorative surgery: fingers that were frozen, or hands, or arms. Some of them were crippled. When I came back to the United States, Dr. [William M.] Hitzig, my personal physician, introduced me to a man who is regarded as one of the world's leading experts in plastic and reconstructive surgery, Dr. Arthur [J.] Barsky. I met with Barsky and told him about these young women. He had two associates, Bernard [E.] Simon and Sidney Kahn. He felt that working as a group they might be able to help these young women. But first it would be necessary for them to get a firsthand view of the problem. So we arranged for them to go to Hiroshima to meet with and examine the Hiroshima Maidens. Barsky, on his return, told me that some improvement would be possible in terms of their facial appearance, although their bodies-- Many of them had been so badly burned that donor tissue on their bodies was already used up. But he would be glad to try his best. He felt that he could get a good result in terms of other physical problems. For example, eyelids that couldn't close because they'd been burned. He thought he could give them the gift of darkness again so they could sleep better. He could unfreeze

fingers. There had been a lot of contractions in the hands that had been caused by the burns; he could relieve that.

The rehabilitative surgery had perhaps more possibilities than the cosmetic surgery, although something could be done in that direction, too. That part of the problem being attended to, it became necessary to go the rest of the way. What about hospitals? Where would the girls live when they were in the United States? How would they get around? How could we take advantage of their presence here to give them skills, educational training? The problem of dentistry. So I went to the one resource that I knew would be responsive, the American Friends Service Committee. They'd be glad, they said, to take over the hospitality. I went to the American Red Cross, and they agreed to help. Then there was the matter of hospitals. Mount Sinai Hospital in New York City volunteered to supply the hospital services. We wrote to other hospitals around the country, because we wanted this to be a national project, rather than a New York project. The American Red Cross helped with that. Now came the matter of the transportation. Kiyoshi Togasaki, who had been a prominent businessman in Tokyo, whom I met-- He was involved in publishing, and he also knew General [John E.] Hull, who had succeeded General [Douglas] MacArthur as head of the occupation [of Japan]. He sent word to me that the

problem of transportation had been handled, because General Hull volunteered to supply an army plane to fly the girls here. Before I knew it, we had a project in our hands.

Then came the actual planning for the trip and the screening of the girls. Which is to say, the final selection. I went back to Hiroshima with Dr. Hitzig, Dr. Barsky, Dr. Kahn, and Dr. Simon, for the final medical screening. We felt that we'd have, oh, maybe twenty-five or twenty-six young women in the first group. There were in all maybe forty. But we also wanted to arrange for the others who didn't come to receive treatment in Japan. Plastic and reconstructive surgery was not there at that time a fully accredited branch of medical surgery. So we arranged to bring some surgeons with us who could study plastic surgery in the United States, and we also wanted the medical profession in Hiroshima to be represented in the group. Four Japanese doctors were assigned to the project. We wanted to have someone who could be a spokesperson for the young women--who could attend to their various needs and be liaison. We found an American-educated Japanese with experience as a nurse and as a teacher, Helen Yokoyama, ideal in every way for the job.

Thus it was that General Hull's plane picked the girls up and brought them to Tokyo. Then while they were transferring to the plane that would fly them across the

Pacific, General Hull received a cable from the State Department requesting the project be canceled, just as the girls were mounting the steps. As I understand the story, he turned the message over to his aide. He said, "I don't have my glasses here. As soon as we get back to the office, make sure that we read this." The plane took off, and back at the office he sent a wire to the State Department saying the plane was already in the air, and he felt that it would make for very poor relations between the two countries to order the plane back. So the girls continued on their way and arrived in New York, where we met them.

I might say that before they left from Japan, the State Department was opposed to the project and had so informed me. The reason for the opposition was that the experts--the anthropological experts, cultural anthropological experts whom they had consulted--said that they felt that the project would have a very difficult time, and would probably collapse, because of the cultural gap involved. That I had underestimated the difficulties of adjustment that would be represented. First of all, the loneliness of the girls, being that far from their homes, never having been away from their parents before; the strange customs in the United States; the language barrier; the strange food; their terror at being in American

hospitals. They felt this whole thing was misguided, and requested that I drop this plan.

Expert advice is always necessary, but you have the ultimate responsibility and obligation to find out whether it fits the particular case. I mean, you've got to make up your own mind. It seemed to me that the one thing that the State Department experts were missing was that this was a loving experience. Americans were reaching out, the girls were reaching back. It was not just a technical case of fitting parts together that weren't congruent. And the experts were wrong. There wasn't a single case of maladjustment, not a single case in which a girl asked to go back. They had predicted they would--that at the end of one week the whole thing would collapse. [There was] not a single case of a girl that didn't adjust, who didn't regard the whole thing as an adventure, a loving adventure. I learned a great deal from that, too, about the fallibility of experts when certain human factors are not taken fully into account. The importance of love and goodwill as factors in being able to override what I had to regard as technicalities.

The girls stayed in the United States for two years, because their surgery, of course, was spread out, and some girls had to have as many as ten or twelve operations. As the doctors had predicted, they couldn't give these girls

brand new faces, but they could improve their appearance, and they could certainly help them functionally and relieve the contractions caused by the burns.

We had another problem. That was the problem of return transportation. Apparently, the State Department wasn't pleased that they had been overruled by General Hull in a matter that they regarded to be in their province. They were able to cancel the military flight going back, because they had plenty of time in which to do it. That left us without transportation. Well, I went to Pan American [World Airways, Inc.], and they were delighted to fly the girls back, with the compliments of the airline.

How did we fund this thing while it was going on in the United States? Readers of the Saturday Review [of Literature] had contributed money. But most of the money came tumbling down out of the heavens, almost by divine dispensation. What happened was that Ralph [L.] Edwards did a program called "This is Your Life." He did a program around the Reverend Kiyoshi Tanimoto, who came with the girls. Tanimoto told the story of these girls. When Ralph Edwards said, "How are you paying for it?" he described what had happened, that people had volunteered, and that readers of the Saturday Review had sent in money. Ralph Edwards said, "Well, don't tell me that enough is available." He said, "I don't think so." Then the next

thing we knew was that mailbags filled with quarters, dimes, half dollars, or dollar bills, began to arrive. We had a large mail sack that was sent to the station. When we got through counting, there was $57,000! [laughter] Much more than we needed.

There was $25,000 left, and this belonged to the Maidens. I informed them that it was their money, but they said that there would be other projects and wanted this to be their gift to any future project. That was how the project for the Ravensbrück Lapins was funded.

The Ravensbrück Lapins were a group of Polish women who had been used as guinea pigs--medical guinea pigs--by Nazi doctors at the Ravensbrück concentration camp. This was a camp consisting mostly of Polish Catholic women. Caroline Ferriday, one of the readers of the **Saturday Review** who had followed the Hiroshima Maidens project, had been communicating with a Polish woman who was a survivor of this group. In this way, Caroline Ferriday learned of the plight of these women, many of them crippled as the result of the experimentation, who were in need of medical attention and surgical attention but also psychological rehabilitation. While in the concentration camp, Nazi doctors would test certain drugs on them. For example, they were testing new sulfanilamide drugs. They'd crack open their bones and insert gangrenous materials--broken

glass, soiled rags--to produce raging infections. And they would try to cope with these infections with these new drugs. These were the survivors of those experiments, but they'd been left washed up, crippled, and sick. Caroline Ferriday hoped that we might do for them what we had done for the Hiroshima Maidens. Thus it was that we used the same team, basically--the Quakers, the Red Cross, the doctors, plastic surgeons, and reconstructive surgeons--to provide help for these women.

But they had another problem, which was that the German government had not provided any help or any reparations. When I looked into it, I discovered the reason was that at that time the Bonn government [Federal Republic of Germany] didn't recognize Poland. So when I went to the German embassy in Washington, I learned they had no way of dealing with these people, since there was no recognition. I went to Senator [Edmund S.] Muskie, who got a great deal of Senate support and made representations to the government of Bonn, which agreed to accept me as a representative of these women. I started to negotiate for reparations, and I was successful. Varying sums were paid, not just to these women, but to some fifteen hundred other Polish survivors of the medical experimentation. You see, the other survivors of the concentration camps had received some compensation, but these particular Poles did not. So

we were able to get compensation for about fifteen hundred. It made a big difference in their lives. Because you're talking here about sums that varied, but they ranged let's say from $15,000 to $20,000, to $35,000, $40,000. At that time, that was a lot of money, especially in those countries, and they were able to straighten out their lives.

But we also wanted to provide the medical attention. These cases were somewhat different medically and surgically from the Hiroshima Maidens. Because here you were dealing with deliberate physical injury, and induced disease, calculated mutilation. These women were crippled, many of them, and so you didn't have problems in plastic surgery so much as you had problems in reconstructive surgery. But the psychological problems were not all that different from the Hiroshima ones. The need was to put them in a loving experience, a caring experience. And they relished the trip to the United States. It was the highlight of their lives. They made new friends. When they returned, they received their compensation from the German government. So their lives, in effect, were really transformed.

We had a third project which involved the Biafran children during the Nigerian civil war. There would be stories appearing in the press about the inability of food

to get through to the Biafrans and about the large scale kwashiorkor cases of children. I asked Omar Fareed of Los Angeles, whom I'd met at the Schweitzer Hospital, to be the medical head of that project. Omar had been traveling all over the world as a sort of a flying doctor. He'd been in Vietnam, Africa, and he'd worked with the Carr Foundation. We brought in some doctors from the Schweitzer Hospital and got medical supplies. This was quite different from either the Ravensbrück Lapins project or the Hiroshima Maidens project. It called for on-site medical attention under wartime conditions. Dr. Fareed and Dr. Davida Taylor, at UCLA, stood up under those conditions. I went there myself and flew into Biafra in a plane that was being peppered by flak. At nighttime even before you heard them you would see these bursts in the air, quite pretty as a matter of fact, like flowers opening up, [laughter] if you could look at it objectively, without reference to your own situation, but just in terms of the appearance. The plane was rocked by it, but we got through. It was an old DC-4, as I remember it, prop plane. Then you had to land in Biafra, which was under attack. The landing at night was rather interesting, because what would happen was that the field would flash its lights for two seconds, and turn them off for maybe twenty. That was the only guidance that the planes had

coming in. But these pilots, volunteer pilots, were very adept at finding their way onto these little landing strips. We landed with a great deal of commotion, with planes being unloaded with food and medicines and a lot of scurrying around. Every once in a while the warning alarm would go off, and you'd take cover. Then there would be the ride in the Jeep, with stopping at checkpoints, but also driving for the most part at night, again with lights that would go off and on. Your headlights would go on for a few seconds, then go out for the next ten or fifteen seconds.

Nothing to me was more poignant than getting out of Biafra. The war was coming to an end, and the entire area was a dense mass of people trying to get out in some way. A woman clung to me, begging me to take her with [me], which of course I didn't have the power to do. Someone else begged me to take a letter, and the Biafran officer who was with me practically ordered me not to do it, because he said if I did that, then there'd be others. But I managed somehow to take the letter. Then the airport was under fire, and the plane was-- I'm sure it was overweight, much beyond limits, densely packed. People were even sitting on the floor. We took off, and it was not without interest. But several days earlier, I was in one of our medical Jeeps, bringing medicines into the remote

villages. It was the day that Americans landed on the moon. We'd heard it over the radio, we were listening to it on the Jeep, on the Jeep radio, the Voice of America. Then suddenly someone in the Jeep shouted that there was a bombing plane coming down on a strafing run. So the driver ran the Jeep into the ditch, and we all were face down in mud. The plane made its run, didn't come back, just made one run. But it was very interesting that here we had Americans setting foot on the moon, and I had my face in the mud on the earth. Which made for an interesting juxtaposition of ideas about the human situation and about what humans were making of their lives.

BASIAGO: Another activity that contributed to the development of your understanding in the medical humanities was your participation in the evaluations group of the University of Missouri's medical school at Kansas City. This, you later commented, opened the door about the way medical education is structured. How so? What reforms in medical education do you now advocate as a result of that experience?

COUSINS: I got into the Missouri experience through Dr. [E.] Grey Diamond, a very eminent physician, who was the son-in-law of Grenville Clark, whom I had known very well. Diamond felt that basic reforms were necessary in medical education. He felt that most of what doctors

learned that was of value to them had come through their experiences with patients. The formal education was always being mediated by actual experience. So he wanted to combine the two. He did a design for medical education that would begin at the undergraduate level--that would take students directly out of high school. Instead of putting them through four years of college education, and then go on to medical school, he wanted to combine college education with medical education but to make it a six-year course and thus shorten the time. Also, when he would take these kids out of high school--right out of high school--the medical education itself would be not only theoretical but functional. The very first day you came into medical school, you would be in a hospital, watching doctors, getting the feel of patients, learning the importance of the relationship between the doctor and the patient, and learning something about the psychology of patients, and knowing about the need to individualize your knowledge, rather than attempting to apply it just out of a textbook in a uniform way. Then back in the classroom, they would augment what they had learned by relating those particular experiences to certain medical principles, learning why certain things had to happen. Why, for example, there are certain procedures that they observe in the hospitals. It was a very striking approach to

education. John Dewey would have called it "learning by doing." The criticism that was made was that these students were being shortchanged in terms of physics, chemistry, biochemistry, and lacked the foundation necessary to practice medicine. It was also predicted that these students wouldn't pass the national examinations at the end of their six years. But the scoffers were wrong. When these kids took their national examinations, they scored very high in the very subjects that they were supposed to be deficient in. Grey Diamond, it seemed to me, was justified and was fully confirmed in his underlying propositions.

There was a group that Diamond brought together, six or seven of us. We would visit the school regularly. We would listen to the problems that had developed, meet with the students, meet with the faculty, and be part of that total experiment. After maybe eight years or so, the group was dissolved because the program had been fully validated, accepted by the AMA [American Medical Association], and now the students were out teaching themselves, or in practice, a lot of them in primary care practice. Grey Diamond's notion was that one of the problems of medicine was that you trained medical students, but then they go into the most profitable lines of practice. But meanwhile, the rural areas of the country are left unattended. So this

education was to try to steer these young people in that direction. In fact, it succeeded in that sense because most of them did go into family practice in rural medicine. So socially as well as scientifically, the program was a success, and I learned a great deal from it.

TAPE NUMBER: XX, SIDE TWO

AUGUST 8, 1988

COUSINS: At University of Missouri in Kansas City, I would make the rounds with the students in the hospitals. I would go to their classes. As a matter of fact, the members of this advisory committee gave lectures to the students. It gave me an opportunity to think a great deal about medical education in a fairly systematic way.

BASIAGO: Another activity, prior to UCLA involvement, was your membership on the special Medical Advisory Group of the Veterans Administration [VA]. This, you said, provided you a "lookout tower."

COUSINS: It didn't precede but was coincident with.

BASIAGO: I imagine this was in the early eighties?

COUSINS: Yes.

BASIAGO: Now, when you say "lookout tower," is that into the field of medicine?

COUSINS: This was after the piece ["Anatomy of an Illness (as Perceived by the Patient)"] appeared in the **New England Journal of Medicine** [Vol. 295 (1976)], and after I had given some talks in various places. Then I was appointed to serve on this group, which was the medical steering group for the Veterans Administration. We would consider not just the administrative problems of running the largest hospital service in the world, and not just a chance to

observe medical problems in the large, but an opportunity to see at very close range how medical research was being applied to problems. For example, one of the problems that came before the group had to do with Agent Orange. This was the defoliant that was used in Vietnam. It poisoned the crops but also produced illness on a wide scale in Vietnam. When the United States was accused of using these poisonous chemicals in the war, it was denied. So Americans were not prepared for the fact that this had actually been used. But meanwhile, you see, soldiers had to handle these chemical poisons. They had to transport it, they had to move it. They also had to use it in poisoning these fields. So a great many American veterans had been affected by it in varying degrees.

BASIAGO: I remember the skin trouble, the acne, the liver cancer, cancers of various organ systems.

COUSINS: That's right. Thousands upon thousands. So it was a question, not just of supplying transient medical care, but also taking care of their social needs that would come up. And that problem still exists.

BASIAGO: I know at this time the various veterans' coalitions were pressuring the VA to reform their treatment program for Agent Orange. What were you successful in persuading the VA to provide for veterans? I know they had sort of a four-point agenda there, such as a delayed

reentry program for Agent Orange veterans. Really, wasn't it a matter of getting the VA to acknowledge that dioxin was a carcinogen?

COUSINS: Yes. This medical board was more than just advisory. It really set medical policy. It was very responsive to the problem and set up procedures. In fact, it advertised so that veterans who had symptoms without knowing what those symptoms were would understand how important it was to have them checked out. But for me that experience with Agent Orange had a much larger significance. Which is to say, if we did this in Vietnam, what was to be expected in the next war? We were working on not just chemical weapons but bacteriological weapons--new diseases that the world had never heard of before, the production of new viruses, the ability to produce heart attacks with a droplet on the skin. It fit into this larger sense of madness that was coming over the world, where the governments themselves were the agents of the madness.

BASIAGO: So when you described that this experience at the VA allowed you a lookout tower, was it into some of these really Strangelovian forms of defense research?

COUSINS: Yes, that's right, that's right.

BASIAGO: Was there any tie-in to that experience in your ultimate effort throughout the eighties to gather the

information that we find in The Pathology of Power, where you're very critical of the runaway defense giant?

COUSINS: It all fit together. It didn't start, to be sure, with my work with the VA, but ever since the bomb was dropped at Hiroshima. We spoke about that.

BASIAGO: I imagine the UCLA Center for Health Sciences is a prodigious recipient of a lot of defense funding, perhaps to work on such mad inventions as you describe. Have you ever had any confrontations here regarding chemical weapons research or bacteriological research?

COUSINS: I've written about it, as you know. I just hope I haven't produced any problems for UCLA. [laughter] But if I have, they were not brought to my attention.

BASIAGO: I recall that you appeared in the early eighties to introduce the Stanford [University] biochemist Paul Berg, and you had brought up the issue of this kind of medical research and the ethics involved. You had no real problem with Paul Berg, who essentially agreed with you. But you did get some heckling and hectoring from members of the audience, who I imagine--

COUSINS: How did you know about this?

BASIAGO: I was there. [laughter]

COUSINS: Were you really?

BASIAGO: Yeah.

COUSINS: Tell me about it.

BASIAGO: This was, I believe, in 1981. You were to introduce Berg, who was discussing his findings in rDNA. By way of introduction, you discussed the ethics of genetics research, and some of the defense implications of altering microorganisms, and this sort of thing. The audience, which I assumed, or was informed, represented the UCLA scientific community in great depth, wasn't very pleased with your introduction of Berg, [laughter] and began to heckle, essentially defending their turf. I'm just curious how that's worked itself out over the past decade or so, given the tremendous amount of money here that the Pentagon provides for research.

COUSINS: It may be fortunate that I didn't know about this to that extent. [laughter] I don't know whether I would have been slowed up if I had known. As I say, I just hope I didn't bring any embarrassment to the university.

BASIAGO: [laughter] Well, I'm sure you had your partisans in the audience as well.

COUSINS: What were you doing there?

BASIAGO: I was covering it for the Daily Bruin, here at UCLA, and I just recall the reaction that was engendered by some of those who were defending such activities. [laughter] I find that one of your chief responsibilities here has been to play the part of a medical ombudsman. What has been the scope of your responsibilities, and what

are some memorable activities you've engaged in as a medical ombudsman? What chief conflicts have you encountered or tried to ameliorate?

COUSINS: Shortly after I came, the public perception of my presence here was that I was to be a representative of the lay community, especially patients. In those early years, I was something of a department store return counter for unwanted merchandise. They looked to me to handle complaints. Well, I found those complaints--most of them were very moving, some very valid--but most of them had to do with the way physicians communicate. One patient, a woman, said that she had been in for a comprehensive workup, and the doctor said that the tests didn't show anything, but he was pretty sure she had cancer. The fact that he was acting unscientifically, and also producing terror without very specific justification, troubled her, and I think she was justified in that. Very few complaints about the quality of medicine, but a great many complaints about the way patients were treated psychologically. Insensitivity in the way the physician communicated the diagnosis. Insensitivity in talking to women about breast cancer, the feeling being that men were being altogether too casual in telling a woman that she ought to have her breast removed.

I had very few patients who came to see me because of

AIDS [acquired immunodeficiency syndrome]. I did go up to San Francisco, at the suggestion of Dr. George Solomon, to meet with a number of AIDS patients with whom he had been working. These were patients who had lived past the predicted time, and he thought it might be interesting for me to talk to them, which I did. It seemed apparent to me that the one thing that this group had in common was that they didn't deny the diagnosis, but they defied the verdict that went with it. They provided mutual support for each other, and also a great deal of support for others who had just been diagnosed. They had something to do in the world; they had a very clear idea of what their mission was to be, and they've gone on, year after year. It's now six or seven years beyond the diagnosis. They're still HIV [human immunodeficiency virus] positive, but they're functioning beautifully. It seems to me that there's a psychological component that has to be recognized. One of the unfortunate things about AIDS is that it has produced an atmosphere of terror, rather than knowledge, and people who are diagnosed immediately have an intensification as a result of the panic that the diagnosis causes, and thus an environment is created for the rapid advance of the disease. With this group, once having conquered the terror and the panic, once having a purpose, they were able somehow to continue functioning.

I had a dentist come to see me about three months ago. He came with his lawyer, because he wanted to leave his money to our program at UCLA. He brought his lawyer so that I could give the lawyer the correct language for the will. He said, "I have very substantial means. I'm a dentist, as you see." I told him that I wouldn't talk to him about his will, and I wouldn't give his lawyer any information. But if he wanted to talk to me about fighting back, I'd be glad to work with him on that. We put him through some exercises, I showed him how to move his blood around. He had a sense of connection with his own body and also a realization that he was not barred from some measure of control over his autonomic nervous system. A few weeks ago, he came back with a report that even now causes my skin to prickle with excitement. He said that he was no longer HIV positive! Of course, the question that occurs to you is, was he misdiagnosed? No, he wasn't misdiagnosed, because they've got the laboratory analysis. Most people who get AIDS, two-thirds of them, I believe, never develop the active form of the disease. Therefore, there must be some compensating mechanism. Even though the T-4 cells are knocked out, other parts of the system take over to some degree. The cytotoxic T-cells, perhaps, other NK [natural killer] cells, I don't know.

But it is true, as I say, that even though you've got

a time bomb ticking away in these people, a lot of them stay free of the active form of the illness. They are able to transmit this, and it can become virulent in others, to be sure. But it does fit in with the larger picture that I've been interested in. Namely, to what extent does the human spirit become relevant? To what extent does determination, faith, hope have biological significance? What is the most that you can make out of a situation? How do you fight back? You may not be able to cure yourself, but you might get the most and the best out of whatever's possible.

TAPE NUMBER: XXI, SIDE ONE

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BASIAGO: It seems that now after twenty-one sessions that we've spent regrettably little time discussing the Saturday **Review of Literature**, which you've been almost synonymously linked with since you assumed its editorship in 1940. Under your editorship, Saturday Review campaigned against the indiscriminate use of miracle drugs, that is, insufficiently tested drugs; publicized the harmful effects of fluoridation; urged the federal government to make a substantial commitment to space exploration; argued for a possible ban of cigarette advertising; warned against the growing casualness toward violence in entertainment; rallied support for pollution control; and condemned American intervention both in the Dominican Republic and Indochina. Now that the Saturday Review has been sold to Omni International, what issues and problems do you advocate that, in your own words, it should "tilt a lance at," in the coming years?

COUSINS: Well, you were good enough to describe some of the causes that the magazine espoused. Perhaps we might emphasize a few of those. First, the fact that the **Saturday Review** was one of the first to recognize the implications of nuclear energy for military purposes and also one of the most emphatic in its campaigning for a

foreign policy based on the need to create a world order, with the effective instruments of governance among nations. These were, perhaps, the major themes. We did, as you say, talk about the need to protect the environment. I think we were the first to use the term environment, of any publication, in the sense that we felt the problem was greater than just pollution, which had been the term in current use up to that time. We felt that there were comprehensive threats to the environment. All this, of course, in a literary magazine.

There were some things that disappointed me about the magazine--my fault. I don't think we had ever really developed a style in criticism that one would say was indigenously **Saturday Review**. I was troubled, perhaps never more so than now, about the quality of criticism in America. I'm especially concerned about the effects of that criticism on drama. The New York theater I think, has fallen off sharply, precisely because you don't have critics who believe deeply in the theater and who nourish it. Criticism in theatre has become almost stylishly cynical and almost hostile. I think back on the criticism of men like John Mason Brown and Brooks Atkinson. Here were critics who loved the theater, who, even when they were harsh, were not hostile; critics who perceived possibilities of development by young playwrights, even

though the early works called for serious criticism. But it was a certain enthusiasm and love of the theater that emerged in the writings of men like John Mason Brown and Brooks Atkinson. In the field of music, we were lucky to have as knowledgeable a writer as Irving Kolodin, especially in the opera. He, too, was someone who committed his life to music. Therefore, even when he was critical, he was not harsh and not self-serving. Katharine Kuh in art had those same qualities. Hollis Alpert in the theater. But as these critics passed from the scene, replacements were not easy. In the case of John Brown, we were lucky that he had introduced us to a young critic by the name of Henry Hewes, whose dominant characteristic was his total immersion in the theater. Henry may not have had the lively writing style of John Brown, but he had good taste.

Well, today even the second generation of critics has thinned out. What is needed in America today it seems to me is a revival of the tradition of the responsible critic--someone who stands between the public and bad books, or bad music, or bad plays, but at the same time is not a barrier to the development of those art forms. Someone who first of all has a sense of responsibility. The critic's standards have to be recognized so the people know what yardsticks he is using. When these yardsticks vary from

play to play it points up a flaw in the critic. But the critic's credentials are not represented by his ability to turn phrases or to be smart at the author's or composer's or playwright's expense. Someone who, first of all, tries to penetrate through to the intentions of the artist and then judge the artist in those terms, as well as his own. My hope, therefore, for the **Saturday Review** today is that it would, first of all, be a source of responsible criticism in literature, music, art, theater, film and the dance. But also [provide] a responsible and intelligent commentary on world affairs, not waiting for things to happen before you write about it, but trying to anticipate the big issues before those issues become front and center.

BASIAGO: Three of your books did that, and in fact each of them became a vade mecum of a particular political movement or group. I'm speaking of "Modern Man Is Obsolete" which in 1945 was so central to [United] World Federalists thought. **In Place of Folly**, your 1961 book, became a central text of SANE [Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy] and the nuclear disarmament movement. Also, in another way, **Anatomy of an Illness as Perceived by the Patient: Reflections on Healing and Regeneration**, which in 1979 became an important philosophical contribution to holistic health. Why did this happen? In other words, from an author's perspective, what did these three works possess

that gave them so much centrality to these movements. Do you feel that something was happening creatively when you wrote these that might explain--?

COUSINS: There was nothing portentous or premeditated about any of those books or any of the books that I've written. It was just that you keep filling up with ideas, and then they spill over into print or into the typewriter. This is the way writers write, I guess. If you have something to say, you become restless until you say it. And it's a matter of growth as well. No, I had no elaborate or presumptuous notions of what these books should do. Obviously an author hopes that his books will be taken seriously. Some of my books were written out of blazing concern and even indignation. The Pathology of Power [1987] was written out of the fierce anger at the way the American people were being manipulated by power brokers in this society. I was surprised at the effects of some of the books. In writing The Anatomy of an Illness, I did hope that it might be helpful to other people who were ill. But I certainly didn't expect that it would be taken up by the medical profession itself, and by medical schools, and that it would have the public impact that it did. All this, of course, is very gratifying to an author.

BASIAGO: Your 1974 work, The Celebration of Life: [A

Dialogue on Immortality and Infinity], takes the form of a Socratic dialogue on immortality and infinity. In the book, you introduce a philosophy that you've come to call "consequentialism." What is consequentialism?

COUSINS: It's an attempt to define the responsibility of individuals to anticipate the effects of causes and to recognize that nothing that is done is without its effect, seen or unseen. Therefore, one of the major purposes of education is to enable us to recognize such connections. And the purpose of philosophy is not just to recognize effects, but to ask ourselves why certain things should be. In philosophy you never get precise answers, to be sure. That's one definition of philosophy, which is that you deal with things that can't be proved. But so long as we have the ability to think, we have the obligation, it seems to me, to think about what is necessary and what will happen when we do things. So all that consequentialism is, I suppose, is a philosophical attempt, not just to speculate on where we stand in the total scheme of things, but where we would like to be and how best to get there.

BASIAGO: In "Modern Man Is Obsolete," you argued that "either war is obsolete--or man is"--that we must learn to live as "world citizens" or die as "world warriors." Indeed, your career history is a remarkable odyssey of a world citizen. Forty years after "Modern Man Is Obsolete,"

how do you assess the state of world citizenship? What makes you despair regarding this theme, and what gives you hope for greater world citizenship?

COUSINS: First, what gives me hope about world citizenship or about the world in general: My ignorance is the source of a great deal of hope. It's hard to make downside predictions about the future unless you know everything involved in it. And the things that are beyond knowing now are things that keep you from being too pessimistic. I know that if in 1945 someone told me that we could stagger along for forty years or more without the instruments of world order and still not have a major nuclear war, I would have argued the proposition. So I take a certain degree of comfort, not just in my ignorance, but in the fact of inadequate predictions in the past.

There's a certain tension, of course, between the things that are knowable and those things that are not. You can analyze problems--these things come within range of the knowable. You can anticipate the effects of certain causes. We spoke about consequentialism a moment ago. So one's intellectual faculties must lead inevitably to concern. But the imponderables rescue you from total despair, and it's these imponderables which we were unable to see in 1945. Obviously, we can look back now on the last forty years and see that the concern has been well

directed. We see now the consequences of the nuclear arms race. The peril is there. We may have been wrong with respect to chronology, but the essentials of our apprehension have been verified. Yet we have had a little more time than we recognized. If in 1945 I had realized that we did have perhaps more time than seemed to be the case, our strategy might have been different. I still believe in the essential need for governance on a world scale, and I still am apprehensive about the consequences of anarchy. We may have had a little more time than we thought was possible, but the disease is clearly diagnosable. The prognosis is still terrifying, and the treatment, unfortunately, has been deferred.

BASIAGO: Have you developed any first principles regarding the obligations we have to one another as human beings that transcend our obligations to the sovereign societies in which we live?

COUSINS: In The Pathology of Power, I try to set them down, and with your permission, I might review them with you. If there is a conflict between the security of the sovereign state and the security of the human commonwealth, the human commonwealth comes first. If there is a conflict between the well-being of the nation and the well-being of mankind or humankind, the well-being of humankind comes first. If there is a conflict between the needs of this

generation and the needs of later generations, the needs of later generations come first. If there is a conflict between the rights of the state and the rights of human beings, the rights of human beings come first. The state justifies its existence only as it serves and safeguards the rights of human beings. Still continuing with first principles, if there is a conflict between public edict and private conscience, private conscience comes first. If there is a conflict between the easy drift of prosperity and the ordeal of peace, the ordeal of peace comes first. These principles, it seems to me, have to do with our place in the world at this particular time. And when I say our, I'm talking not just about Americans, but all people, whether they go by the name of Americans or Soviets or Chinese or British or Indians or Africans or Japanese. These are obligations that we have to one another that transcend our obligations to the sovereign state.

INDEX

Abrams, Henry H., 411-13
Acheson, Dean G., 125, 337
Adams, John, 156
Adams, Sherman, 406
Adler, Mortimer, 35, 36, 258, 354-55
Agent Orange, 574-75
AIDS, 579-81
Aiken, George D., 436
Alpert, Hollis, 584
Altschul, Frank, 53, 128, 339
Alvarez, Luis W., 208-9
American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), 225-26, 233-38
American Friends Service Committee, 133, 559, 565
Americans United for World Government, 9-18, 76-77, 96, 97, 98, 131, 158, 316, 341
Anatomy of an Illness as Perceived by the Patient: Reflections on Healing and Regeneration, 72, 99, 527, 547, 585, 586
Anderson, Jean, 111
Anderson, Marian, 460
Arbatov, Georgi A., 464, 475, 506, 513
Armstrong, Hamilton Fish, 125, 128
Arnold, Henry H., 183, 188, 191
Arvin, Newton, 156
Asian-African Conference, Bandung, Indonesia (1955), 297, 298-99, 301-3
Atkinson, Brooks, 583-84

Baldwin, Roger, 225-26, 234, 236
Ball, Joseph H., 10, 158
Barnes, Joseph F., 57, 141
Barr, Stringfellow, 35, 316, 341
Barrymore, John, 124
Barsky, Arthur J., 558, 560
Beard, Charles A., 24-25
Beecher, Henry K., 548
Bell, Ulric, 11
Benchley, Robert C., 124
Benét, Stephen Vincent, 141, 142, 147, 162
Benét, William Rose, 99, 115-16, 123, 147
Benton, William, 34-35, 363, 430
Berg, Paul, 576-77
Bergland, Richard, 536
Bernays, Edward L., 145
Bethe, Hans A., 208
Birla, G.D., 272, 274
Blake, Mildred, 316
Block, Herbert L., 385
Bohlen, Charles E., 337, 456
Bohr, Neils, 209
Bolling, Landrum R., 517
Book-of-the-Month Club, 100, 109
Borgese, Elisabeth Mann, 31-33
Borgese, Giuseppe A., 31-33, 52
Bowles, Chester, 363, 429, 430
Brennan, Francis, 163-64
Brewster, Kingman, 317
Bridges, Styles, 318
Brown, Harrison S., 95, 98, 203, 205, 207-8, 353, 354
Brown, John Mason, 66, 123, 149, 583-84
Brzezinski, Zbigniew, 474, 486, 488-89, 506
Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, 208, 353
Bundy, McGeorge, 197, 199, 488, 511
Burke, Edmund, 9
Burton, Harold H., 158

Bush, Vannevar, 209
Butler, Nicholas Murray, 45-47, 349
Byrnes, James F., 176, 188, 190, 191, 215, 351

Canby, Henry S., 58, 84, 99, 100, 102, 104, 105, 106, 109, 110-11, 114-15, 118, 120, 123, 129, 132, 366
Carey, James B., 399, 409
Carnegie, Andrew, 383
Catton, Bruce, 163
Caulkins, Chuck, 362
Celebration of Life: A Dialogue on Immortality and Infinity, 99, 586-87
Century Club, 34, 54, 122-23, 124, 126-27, 128
Cerf, Bennett A., 117
Chamberlain, Neville, 39-41
Chase, Stuart, 52
Cherne, Leo M., 11, 385, 426
Churchill, Winston, 357
Ciardi, John A., 95
Citizens Committee for a Nuclear Test Ban, 434-36
Clark, Grenville, 12, 14, 42-43, 49, 53, 90, 91-92, 316, 317, 318-24, 327-31, 339-40, 341, 343, 344-45, 346-47, 349, 380, 382-83, 470-71, 483-84, 569
Clay, Lucius D., 225-26
Clayton, William L., 434
Clemente, Carmine C., 537-38, 546-47
Coffee House Club, 123-24, 128
Cohn, Roy M., 373, 379
Cominsky, Jacob R., 105, 106-7, 527
Commager, Henry Steele, 147
Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy (SANE), 133, 221, 304, 387, 391-92, 401, 404-5, 408-17, 430, 432-35, 439-40, 441-42, 585
Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies, 21
Committee to Frame a World Constitution, 32
Commoner, Barry, 387, 389, 391, 393-94
Compton, Arthur H., 205
Compton, Karl T., 96
Conference on Science, Philosophy, and Religion, and Their Relation to the American Way of Life, 258
"Confessions of a Miseducated Man," 257
Cooper, Alfred Duff, 21
Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), 125-26, 127-28, 338
Counts, George S., 87
Cousins, Ellen Kopf (wife), 128, 233, 314
Cowan, Louis G., 144, 145, 165
Cowles, Gardner "Mike," Jr., 57, 155
Cranston, Alan, 317-18, 322, 323, 343, 347-48
Creel, George, 145, 165-66
Crouse, Russel, 142
Crowninshield, Frank, 123, 124
Cuban Missile Crisis, 480-84
Cultural and Scientific Conference for World Peace (1949), 325-27, 365-70, 466-67
Current History, 1-5, 12, 24, 26, 49, 66, 70, 71, 84, 92, 138
Cushing, Richard, 435

Dartmouth College Conference, 456-96, 504-26
Davis, Elmer H., 61, 66, 119, 138-39, 143-44, 152-53, 162-63, 164, 168
De Golyer, E.L., 134-37, 249, 250, 289

Denny, George V., 210
De Voto, Bernard A., 163
Dewey, John, 84-88, 90, 129
Diamond, E. Grey, 569-72, 345
Dick, Edison, 377
Dickey, John S., 458
Dillon, Kathleen M., 545, 546
"Dinner for Twenty-six in Berlin," 227
Dodd, Thomas J., 411-16, 437
Dodd Committee, 401, 413-14
Donovan, William J., 141-43
Douglas, William O., 381
Du Bois, W.E.B., 370
DuBridge, Lee A., 96, 98, 203, 204, 205
Dulles, Allen W., 332, 340-41, 423
Dulles, John Foster, 194-95, 300, 303, 332-34, 336, 349, 399-400, 406, 454
Dworkadas, Kandghi, 274-75

Eastman, Max, 368
Edwards, Ralph L., 563
Eichelberger, Clark M., 11, 48, 89, 123
Einstein, Albert, 32, 96, 202-6, 316, 324-25, 353, 357, 359, 399
Eisenhower, Dwight D., 44-45, 180, 183, 188, 191, 195, 243, 300-301, 305-6, 369-70, 373, 390, 399, 405-7, 456
Eisenhower, Milton S., 155
Eliot, George Fielding, 210, 212, 213
Emerson, Ralph Waldo, 110, 118, 140, 156
English, Spofford G., 98, 353
Ernst, Morris L., 234

Fadiman, Clifton, 55, 142, 211
Fareed, Omar, 567
Farrar, John C., 120, 166
Faulkner, William, 93
Fawzy, Fawzy I., 537
Federalist Papers, The, 5, 7-8, 17, 49, 60, 223-24
Federal Union, Inc., 341-42
Federation of Atomic Scientists, 353
Fedorov, Evgeny K., 495, 496, 508
Ferrero, Guglielmo, 52
Ferriday, Caroline, 564-65
Field, Marshall III, 318
Finletter, Thomas K., 11, 53, 90, 318, 322, 339, 358-59
Fischer, Louis, 318, 322
Fisher, Adrian S., 289
Fonda, Henry, 385
"Food for the Trust Busters," 65
Ford, Gerald R., 426
Ford Foundation, 456, 459, 493
Forrestal, James V., 180, 191, 350
Franck, James, 203, 353
Frankel, Osmond K., 234
Freedom House, 425-26
Fulbright, J. William, 436-37
Fuller, Margaret, 110, 118
Fuller, R. Buckminster, 37, 494-503
Fulsom, Marion B., 434

Galbraith, John Kenneth, 494
Gandhi, Indira Nehru, 250-51, 271, 282, 283, 308-14
Gandhi, Mohandas K., 28, 30, 265, 271-75, 285-87, 292
Gandhi, Rajiv, 308, 313
Gandhi, Sanjay, 309, 313
Garrison, William Lloyd, 156
Gideonse, Harry D., 426
Glaser, Ronald, 545

Goldberg, Arthur J., 198-99
Goldberger, Marvin L., 209
Golding, William, 368
Goldsmith, James, 11
Goldwater, Barry M., 474
Good Inheritance: The Democratic Chance, 5, 38-39, 59-60, 67, 73, 76, 78
Gorbachev, Mikhail S., 336, 470, 509, 525
Great Books of the Western World, 33, 35, 258-59
Green, Elmer E., 552
Greenblatt, Milton, 532, 534
Grin, S. Spencer, 530
Groves, Leslie R., 204, 359, 362
Guinzburg, Harold K., 146, 165
Gunther, John, 26-29, 272-73

Hackett, John W., 138-39, 144, 146
Hamilton, Alexander, 67, 252
Hammarskjöld, Dag, 110
Hammerstein, Alice, 385
Hammerstein, Oscar II, 381-82
Hand, Augustus N., 380
Hand, Learned, 90, 380
Harriman, Florence Jaffray, 383
Harriman, W. Averell, 337, 338
Harris, Patricia Roberts, 506
Hatch, Carl A., 10, 158
Hays, Arthur Garfield, 225-26, 229, 230-31, 232, 234
Head First: The Biology of Hope, 543
Hellman, Lillian, 325, 365, 367, 369
Hewes, Henry, 584
Higinbotham, William, 98, 353
Hiroshima--bombing of, 173-94, 213-15
Hiroshima Maidens Project, 244, 556-64
Hiss, Alger, 349
Hitler, Adolf, 25, 39, 81, 83
Hitzig, William M., 448, 558, 560
Hobson, Laura Z., 163
Ho Chi Minh, 196
Hollins, Harry B., 318
Hook, Sidney, 367, 368, 474
Houseman, John, 141
Hughes, H. Stuart, 432
Hull, John E., 244, 559-61
Human Options: An Autobiographical Notebook, 27, 63
Humphrey, Hubert H., 430, 436-37, 438, 439
Hunt, Haroldson L., 137, 447
Hutchins, Robert Maynard, 31, 32, 33-35, 258, 354-55
Hutchins, Vesta Orlick, 34

Improbable Triumvirate: John F. Kennedy, Pope John, Nikita Khrushchev, 427, 436, 482
In Place of Folly, 421, 585
Institute for United States and Canadian Studies (Moscow), 475

James, William, 140
Jaspers, Karl, 474
Jefferson, Thomas, 51, 156, 252
John XXIII, 481-82
John Birch Society, 346
Johnson, Lyndon B., 195-96, 197, 199, 200-201, 428, 449-51, 511
Jones, David C., 485

Kahn, Herman, 474, 494
Kahn, Sidney, 558, 560
Katz, Milton S., 391, 415, 437, 439-40
Kennan, George F., 337, 338

Kennedy, Edward M., 446, 447
Kennedy, John F., 99, 196, 289-91, 317-18, 344, 408-9, 418-22, 427-29, 435, 440, 442-49, 475-76, 481-82
Kennedy, Robert F., 446
Kettering, Charles F., Foundation, 208, 323, 457, 493, 521
Khrushchev, Nikita S., 196, 336, 450, 475-76, 511, 515-16
Kiecolt-Glaser, Janice, 545
Kilpatrick, James, 346
Kilpatrick, William H., 87, 91
Kirk, Grayson L., 47
Kissinger, Henry A., 423, 474
Kistiakowsky, George B., 96, 208
Kleeman, Charles R., 534
Kolodin, Irving, 584
Koppel, Ted, 180-81
Korneichuk, Aleksandr E., 460, 465, 494-95
Kotelawala, John L., 301
Kroc, Joan B., 527
Kuh, Katharine, 584

Ladejinsky, Wolf, 240
Lamont, Thomas W., 125, 126-27
Landon, Alfred M., 411
Lannung, Helmut, 357
Lasky, Victor, 346
Latter, Albert L., 394-95
Laurence, William L., 176
League of Nations, 10, 15, 16-17
Leahy, William D., 180, 183, 188, 191
Lear, John, 548
Lehman, Kitty, 354, 383
Leonard, Leonard M., 2-3, 69
LeShan, Lawrence, 548
Lewandowski, Bohdan, 197
Libby, Willard F., 393, 395-96, 398
Lilienthal report, 358-59, 364
Lindbergh, Anne M., 95
Lindsay, Howard, 142
Lister, Walter, 64
Locke, John, 9
Lodge, Henry Cabot, 200
Loveman, Amy, 57, 84, 99-100, 102-6, 108-10, 112, 115, 117, 121, 129, 130
Lovett, Robert M., 337, 338, 339-40
Lowenstein, Allard K., 446
Lyons, Eugene, 368

MacArthur, Douglas, 180, 188, 191, 225, 238, 240-44
MacFarlane, Robert C., 457
MacLeish, Archibald, 141-42, 147, 150, 152-53, 163, 164, 165
Malone, Dumas, 156
Malone, Thomas F., 508
Marcos Ferdinand E., 196, 430
Marshall, George C., 203, 243
Marshall, Lenore, 438
Mathews, David O., 457, 493, 521
Mathias, Charles M., Jr., 512
McCarthy, Joseph R., 372-75
McClelland, David C., 545, 546
McCloy, John J., 125, 126, 128, 337-38, 339-40
McGhee, George C., 249-50, 288-89
McKee, Charles, 18
McMahon, Brien, 362-64
Mead, Margaret, 326, 466-67
Mehta, Ved, 309
Mellinkoff, Sherman M., 531-32, 534-35, 538, 543
Melman, Seymour, 432, 472
Mensh, Ivan N., 532-33

Meyer, Cord, 317, 322, 324, 340, 347
Meyner, Robert M., 434
Mill, John Stuart, 9
Miller, Neal E., 548
"Modern Man Is Obsolete," 10, 95, 129-32, 316, 587
Moley, Raymond, 66
Morley, Christopher, 99, 100, 102, 105, 109, 111-13, 115, 117, 121, 123, 130, 132, 496-97
Morlion, Felix P., 480-81
Moses, Robert, 310-11, 314
Mowrer, Edgar Ansel, 26, 316, 318, 355-56
Mowrer, Lillian Thompson, 355
Moyers, Bill D., 197, 450, 488, 511
Murphy, Franklin D., 494, 506, 533-34, 538
Murrow, Edward R., 143
Muskie, Edmund S., 437, 565
Muste, Abraham J., 133, 402-4, 416-17

Nehru, Jawaharlal, 28, 29-30, 82-83, 110, 249-51, 256, 260-89, 292-308, 323
Nevins, Allan, 147
Newspaper Guild, 86
New York Evening Post, 1-2
Nhu, Madame, 447
Niebuhr, Reinhold, 49-50
Nixon, Richard M., 426, 505, 516
Nuclear arms: at Hiroshima, 173-94, 213-15; opposition to, 202-6, 279-80, 327-28, 349-53, 387-426, 476-79. See also Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy

Olds, Glenn, 497
Oppenheimer, Frank, 204, 360
Oppenheimer, J. Robert, 204, 359-62
Overstreet, Bonaro W., 95
Overstreet, Harry A., 95

Packard, Vance, 70
Paepcke, Walter P., 35
Paine, Thomas, 155-56, 157
Pastore, John O., 436
Pathology of Power, The, 98, 176, 180-83, 194, 203, 206, 522, 576, 586, 589
Paulding, Charles C., 210, 216
Pauling, Linus C., 400-402, 413
Pell, Herbert Claiborne, 317
Peterson, Peter G., 513
Pickett, Clarence E., 133, 391, 395, 404-5
Pike, James A., 434
Poetry of Freedom, The, 116
Polevoi, Boris N., 460, 506
Pound, Ezra, 151-52
Pringle, Henry F., 163-64

Rabi, Isidor I., 354
Ravensbrück Lapins, 564-66
Reagan, Ronald W., 348, 426
Redlich, Fredrick C., 532
Reuther, Victor G., 384, 385
Reuther, Walter P., 383-84, 399, 409, 434, 435
Reves, Emery, 317, 318, 322
Reynolds, Earle E., 388
Roberts, Owen J., 43-44, 48-49, 317, 318
Robeson, Paul, 370-71
Robinson, James Harvey, 8
Rockefeller, David, 128, 450-51, 459, 486, 487, 494, 510-11
Rockefeller, Nelson A., 422-24
Rockefeller, Neva, 497
Rockefeller Foundation, 493
Romulo, Carlos P., 95, 323, 349
Roosevelt, Eleanor, 411

Roosevelt, Franklin D., 44, 63-65, 66-67, 87, 143, 170-71, 192, 204, 505
Roosevelt, John, 34
Rosenfeld, Albert, 548
Rosenman, Samuel I., 66
Ross, Charles, 185
Rousseau, Jean Jacques, 9
Rugg, Harold O., 91
Ruml, Beardsley, 34, 54-55, 123, 207, 361
Rusk, Dean, 181, 289
Rusk, Ralph L., 118
Russell, Bertrand, 52, 94-95, 422
Russian Relief Administration, 167
Ryan, Robert, 385

Sachs, Alexander, 96, 202-3, 204, 207
Sakharov, Andrei D., 464
Saltonstall, Leverett, 436
Salvemini, Gaetano, 52
Sasamoni, Shekego, 194
Saturday Review of Literature, 36, 61, 66, 71, 89, 94, 95, 96, 100-107, 109, 121-22, 124, 129-30, 132-33, 138, 151, 203, 210-11, 249, 291, 358, 387, 439, 446, 501, 527-30, 548, 563, 582-85
Scharansky, Natan, 512
Schelling, Thomas C., 474
Scherman, Harry, 100, 109, 120
Schine, G. David, 373, 379
Schlesinger, Arthur M., Jr., 163-64, 419, 420
Schmidt, Helmut, 199
Schultz, Lillian, 435-36
Schuster, Max L., 106
Schweitzer, Albert, 28, 94, 110, 120, 303-4, 399-400, 556
Scott, Lawrence D., 391
Selye, Hans, 545-46
Seymour, Whitney North, 234
Shapley, Harlow, 365-66
Shaw, George Bernard, 13, 92
Sherwood, Robert E., 66, 119-20, 141-42, 147, 148-50, 152-53, 155, 160, 162, 165
Shirer, William L., 143
Shostakovich, Dmitri, 366, 367-68
Shotwell, James T., 47-48, 88-90, 91, 120, 380
Shultz, George P., 234
Simon, Bernard E., 558, 560
Simon, Norton, 439, 494
Singh, Tara, 284-85
Sisson, Edgar G., 90, 119-20, 165-67
Smith, Harrison, 57, 105
Smith, Robert D., 318
Smyth, Henry De Wolf, 353
Snow, Edgar P., 344-45
Sohn, Louis B., 341, 346
Sokolsky, George E., 346
Solarz, Stephen J., 517
Solomon, George, 579
Solzhenitsyn, Aleksandr, 466
Sonnenberg, Benjamin, 354
Sonnenfeldt, Helmut, 486
Sorenson, Theodore C., 419, 420-21, 481
Sparkman, John, 436
Spock, Benjamin, 401, 432, 441-42
Stalin, Joseph, 14, 468-69
Starret, Vincent, 111
Stassen, Harold E., 356, 400
Stevens, George P., 122
Stevenson, Adlai E., 110, 192, 377-81, 390-91, 514
Stimson, Henry L., 41-42, 44-45, 183, 188, 330, 339-40
Stone, I.F., 70-71
Stone, Shepard, 458-59
Stout, Rex T., 11, 142, 143, 162
Streit, Clarence K., 11-19, 98, 341-42

Szilard, Leo, 96, 98, 202-4, 205, 207, 353, 354, 398

Taft, Charles P., 169
Taft, Martha W. Bowers, 169, 379
Taft, Robert A., 168-69, 379-80
Talks with Nehru, 293, 294
Tanimoto, Kiyoshi, 557, 563
Taylor, Davida, 567
Taylor, Shelley E., 532
Taylor, Telford, 385-86
Tead, Ordway, 126-27
Teller, Edward, 206, 394-400
Thomas, Norman, 210, 215-17, 220-24
Thompson, Bradbury, 139
Thoreau, Henry David, 110, 118
Timbres, Harry G., 71
Timbres, Rebecca Janney, 71
Togasaki, Kiyoshi, 559
Tracy, Merle E., 2-4, 38, 68-70, 73-74, 84, 90, 119, 121
Treasury of Democracy, A, 60, 116
Truman, Harry S, 176, 178, 179, 182, 184-86, 189-92, 201, 203, 206, 212-15, 242-43, 278, 331, 351
Tucker, Carll, 439
Tugwell, Rexford G., 66

Udall, Morris K., 512
United Nations, 10, 17, 48, 130-31, 184, 255-56, 276-77, 324, 343, 349, 358, 386, 405, 519
United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, 438-39
United States Office of War Information (OWI), 119, 140-55, 159-61, 163-65, 168-70, 173-75
United World Federalists (UWF), 315, 317-24, 353-58, 376, 380-85, 409, 438, 439. **See also** World federalism
University of California, Los Angeles: Boyer-John Wayne Oncology Center, 539; Brain Research Institute, 537-38; Program in Psychoneuro-immunology, 527, 531-39, 543-44
Urquhart, Clara, 94
USA, 119, 120, 138-40, 147-48, 150, 160-61, 166, 167-68

Valenti, Jack J., 197, 431
Van Doren, Carl, 62
Van Doren, Irita, 56, 57
Van Doren, Mark, 316
Veterans Administration--Medical Advisory Group, 573-75
Vietnam War, 195-201, 430-32, 450-53

Wadsworth, James J., 434
Walter, Paul, 438
Warburg, James P., 53, 141, 162
Wells, H.G., 92-94
West, Louis J. "Jolly," 532, 537, 538
Wharton, John F., 92, 386
White, William Allen, 21
Whitman, Walt, 58, 110, 118, 155, 156, 265
Whittaker, John, 26
Wilder, Thornton, 141
Williamson, Sam, 144
Willkie, Wendell L., 34, 54-58, 162, 425
Wilson, Woodrow, 88, 89, 192
World federalism, 7-18, 40-60, 67-68, 75-78, 97-98, 131-32, 158, 161-63, 218-24, 315-24, 328-32, 336-50, 353-58, 372, 380-85

Writers Board for World
  Government, 75, 76-77,
  142, 155, 158, 163, 355

Yokoyama, Helen, 560
Yost, Charles W., 517

Zhou Enlai, 297
Zorin, Valerian A., 337-38

6x 4/6